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A-League Round 2 Friday 18th Oct - Sunday 20th Oct 2013

JETS POSTER Page 14

RD ONE REWIND Page 5

VPL REVIEW Page 16

V-LEAGUE WRAP Page 21

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My Sat

Au revoir Holger after national embarrassment in Paris

Holger Osieck sacked after Australia hammered 6-0 by France

By Tom Chieftain

One 6-0 loss can be seen as forgivable, especially when it's against Brazil in Brazil. A second thrashing, especially with national pride on the line, and even if it's at the hands of one Europe's better teams, is not. With that 6-0 loss to France, 4-0 at halftime, Socceroos coach Holger Osieck received his marching orders.

Since the mid stages of World Cup qualifiers, the football community has been simmering with a virtual ultimatum that anything less than a reasonably competitive performance against France would be terminal for Osieck. As it panned out, Football Federation Australia harboured those views too, and was swift to act, bidding adieu to Holger only hours after the match. The key reason other than the result was the lack of "rejuvenation and regeneration" of the squad. Again, a sentiment felt by the broader football community.

Two glaring errors were made in this game against France. With Tom Oar injured, to fill the troublesome left-back role, Dave Carney was brought back from exile. Why? He's passed his best, if his best was ever good enough. He's been a liability in the past, and was again. He conceded the first goal by throwing his hand in the air and being called for handball. Regardless that he didn't actually touch the ball, it was the action of an insecure player – one that's never been a dedicated left-back either – to throw his hand up. For the sake of inches, the ball would have hit his hand. Second mistake, to strengthen the right side that France's Franck Ribery notoriously exploits, Osieck threw James Holland at right-back and pushed Luke Wilkshire forward. Why? Holland is less of a right-back than Wilkshire is. Wilkshire's struggling to get a game for his Russian club, so the call to persist with him at the expense of a new, dedicated right-back, made even less sense. Holland, normally a central midfielder, was thrown to the wolves. He was all at sea, and easily beaten for France's sixth goal. A better option would be to play five at the back, three proper defenders and the two wing-backs. That gives you the cover in defence and the flexibility in attack.

Then there's the enduring positional error: Tim Cahill as striker. He's not a striker! He's most dangerous as a lurking midfielder, as proven by his rush of goals with his New York club from midfield and the fact his goal-rate has dried up with the national team. Behind Cahill was Robbie Cruse – again wasted. Frank Lebeouf, former French international, gave a commentary in coaching excellence during the broadcast. He noted Cahill needed to be in midfield where his experience could be used to provide poise during the French onslaught. Often Cahill would drop deep to find the ball, which saw the French line higher, instantly pressuring the Australians whenever they received the ball. When France had the ball, Cahill and Kruse were easily drawn forward, virtually allowing a vacant midfield with defensive midfielders Bresciano and Jedinak too deep. France's third goal was a case in point. Collected direct from a goal-kick, passed to Ribery, a through ball, goal.

The "review" that was mentioned upon Osieck's sacking has obviously been in the process for months, given the fact FFA were so swift to act on Holger. Those decisions are not made so abruptly. The action might be, the decision not. The timing is also right for a local coach.

Probably the only excuse for Osieck is the calibre of opponents taken on so soon after qualifying. The team had so much time on the ball against the Arab teams, could be lazy with passing, or even expect to win a pass if tightly marked. Not here. Brazil and France stripped them easily, while any dallying on the ball was open sesame to be dispossessed. Lebeouf reiterated this point too, noting later in the game a missed opportunity to cross just "kills momentum". Instead of immediately crossing, a few little passes were made trying to work an even better option, seemingly a guaranteed option, like you might against a glaringly inferior team. Bad. Best to get it in quickly and keep pressure on by capturing the rebound. You just never saw Brazil or France messing about it.
Nor did they treat Australia with contempt by looking for guaranteed chances. They only needed a sniff.

Osieck said post match that nothing tried in training was transferred to the pitch. That's damning against the coach, suggesting the players wanted remedial action with the coaching situation and possibly took it upon themselves. With the first goal conceded so quickly, it was easy for the team to become disheartened, with the famed Australian "spirit" dormant. When asked if the players were fully behind him, Holger's response and body language was telling, citing that regardless of being behind the coach, national pride should keep them interested. It should.

There were some positives from the match. It was 6-0 on 50 minutes, so the team kept France scoreless for nearly the entire second half. Mitch Langerak excelled in his debut as goalkeeper, keeping the score at 6-0 with several superb, reflex saves, and great positioning. While the cynics will say it could have been 10-0, "it could be" any number of goals in any numbers games. That's the reason for goal-keepers and a low scoring sport. Had Langerak not saved most of those shots, they'd be classed as errors and his debut a failure. As it stood he was at no fault for any of the goals conceded and allowed the team to walk off with 0-0 draw over 40 minutes.

In a way, Holger's done Australia a favour. We needed to find the level of the team now, not at the World Cup. While you can never really pass up a glamour match like Brazil in Brazil, France might have been too much. The adjustment phase from casual Asia to up-tempo Europe was too great.
While Brazil might have been forgivable, the fact virtually nothing was done about the concerns there in the game against France, it was self-crucifying.

The key will be the management of problems discovered. Wilkshire, Carney, Bresciano – out. Schwarzer now surely is the reserve keeper given Langerak's performance. Why would you drop him? Jedinak needs a shake-up. Something not mentally right with him. Maybe elevated to a senior leadership role after the purging of several elder players could do wonders. Anyone in the Middle East like Holman, gone. Archie Thompson gone. Harry Kewell needs to explode in the A-League to be even considered a recall.

As to a new coach, FFA Chairman Frank Lowy wants a local. The "review" that was mentioned upon Osieck's sacking has obviously been in the process for months, given the fact FFA were so swift to act on Holger. Those decisions are not made so abruptly. The action might be, the decision not. The timing is also right for a local coach. While Australia has been more in mercenary mode with their past few coaches, if there's to be a move towards giving younger players experience, it makes just as much sense as doing similar with a local coach. While Ange Postecoglou is the glamour choice, Graham Arnold could be more likely given his international experience as both interim and assistant coach, proven ability at integrating new players and melding a team, and seemingly been itching to jump from his A-League role if a better offer came elsewhere. Brazil 2014 could be the making of both the new coach and the newer players. Despite all the recent turmoil and melodrama, it's actually an exciting time.

Osieck is an Aussie Sacked. No bossanova for Holger in Brazil 2014. More like Boss and Over.

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Osieck Sacked

Australia coach Holger Osieck has been sacked just hours after the Socceroos' embarrassing 6-0 loss to France on Saturday morning.

The German was under pressure heading into the friendly in Paris after his side's dreadful 6-0 thrashing at the hands of Brazil in early September.

Football Federation Australia had indicated the Socceroos needed to put in a better display against France for Osieck to avoid the sack.

But, after being outplayed and outclassed, Australia were 4-0 down inside 29 minutes in Paris in another listless performance.

The FFA wasted little time in terminating Osieck's contract, with reports suggesting the move was made barely two hours after the loss.

Osieck ignored the speculation surrounding his future heading into the clash but was unable to guarantee he still had the support of his players post-match.

He said he understood he would be under pressure after his side conceded 12 goals in two matches.

It leaves the Socceroos looking for a coach exactly eight months out from the 2014 World Cup, which they have already qualified for.

Former Australia coach Guus Hiddink appears the leading candidate for the role after helping the Socceroos to the round-of-16 in Germany in 2006.

Frenchman Gerard Houllier and Argentine Marcelo Bielsa are among others who have been linked with the position.

If the FFA opt to turn to a local name, Melbourne Victory coach Ange Postecoglou and Central Coast boss Graham Arnold are the frontrunners.

Osieck was named Socceroos coach in August 2010, leading an ageing side to the 2011 Asian Cup final, which they lost 1-0 to Japan after extra-time.

The former Urawa Reds and Canada coach won 23 of the 44 matches he led Australia in, including seeing the Socceroos to the World Cup after an indifferent qualifying campaign.

Neill: ´My words were twisted´

Lucas Neill has denied pitting Australia's young players against their senior team-mates and claims his 'words were twisted'.

The captain, speaking on Monday after consecutive 6-0 defeats and the sacking of coach Holger Osieck, provoked the ire of many supporters when he suggested that the junior players in the national team set-up lacked the passion of their more experienced colleagues.

The team put their alleged divisions behind them to beat lowly Canada 3-0 in a friendly at Craven Cottage on Tuesday, and the veteran centre-back afterwards stood by his pre-match comments.

"I said during the week - and my words were twisted - that we needed spirit," he told Fox Sports.

"We found it tonight, we worked very hard for each other. We had a good game plan, good formation. We created a number of chances and we deserved the win tonight. We'll take a lot of confidence from that.

"I just wanted a call for passion, it wasn't me trying to put one against the other, or split old versus young. It was about everybody. When you have the shirt on, you have to wear it with pride.

And tonight, we showed that pride in our performance.

"It's very pleasing, I'm very proud. It's been a tough couple of games. The reaction today has been excellent. As always, we lose together and we win together. Today was about the team. I'm very proud of the guys, I thought it was a great effort."

When asked if the young players on Tuesday showed the spirit that he previously claimed had been lacking, Neill said: "Of course, they did. As a result, with some hard work and effort, some really nice combination football at stages, we got a really well deserved win. It's nice after two very big defeats to come away with a very nice victory."

One such youngster was Mathew Leckie, who came off the bench to score his first goal for Australia, and he believes the players singled out for scrutiny by Neill acquitted themselves well.

"These things happen throughout national teams," he said, referring to Osieck's departure.

"We're all professional. Us players just have to worry about things on the pitch.

"I think the young guys that came in today, we really gave our best."

Australia are yet to announce their opponents for the next two international friendlies to be played on November 16 and 20, by which time a new coach - seemingly Ange Postecoglou or Graham Arnold - could be in place

FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

Vidmar: No comment on Socceroos job

Aurelio Vidmar has declined the chance to express his interest in the Australia job after taking charge for a 3-0 win over Canada.

Vidmar stepped in following the dismissal of Holger Osieck on Friday, with the German sacked just hours after Australia were thrashed 6-0 by France in Paris.

Football Federation Australia chairman Frank Lowy has indicated the governing body's preference is for a local to take the top job.

But Vidmar, speaking after the win at Craven Cottage, opted not to confirm his candidacy.

"I won't be discussing anything (in the media)," he told Fox Sports.

"I'm just trying to get over this last few days. I'll just have a bit of a break now and see what happens."

When asked if the comfortable victory on Tuesday had restored any pride in the Socceroos camp, Vidmar said: "A little bit. There's a long way to go.

"There's a lot to ponder after this. We asked for the passion and that's what we got.

"It was a very good result and that's very pleasing. We just wanted a positive performance and that's what we got."

Veteran midfielder Mark Bresciano also chose not to endorse FFA's decision to seek to appoint an Australian.

"I don't have much to say there," he said. "I just hope that the next coach that comes in can do a good job for us. Not to rush and just to choose the right one."

GOAL! WEEKLY

Contents

Soccer Hotlines	3
Scoreboard	4
Match Reports	5-10
Rd 2 Previews	11
Souvenir Poster	14
VPL Preview	16
TV Heaven	18
V-League	21
Overseas	23

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A-League delivers record SBS ratings

SBS 2 recorded its highest audience of the year when the Hyundai A-League made its free-to-air TV debut with the live match between Sydney FC and the Newcastle Jets. last Friday night

SBS recorded an average combined metro and regional audience of 243,000 (166,000 metro and 77,000 regional) for the opening round match. The match delivered SBS 2 a 493% increase for the 7:30pm – 9:30pm Friday night timeslot (previously 33,000 metro and 8,000 regional) since the channel relaunched in April this year.

The match was also the highest rating sport broadcast for SBS 2 on record, bettering the 8th day of the 2011 IAAF World Championship in Athletics on 3 September 2011, which recorded an average combined metro and regional audience of 240,000 (151,000 metro and 89,000 regional).

In total, 495,000 viewers tuned in to SBS's coverage of the match based on five minute consecutive reach viewing.

In Sydney, the match attracted an impressive 8.3% free-to-air share and in Southern NSW 10.8%.

Ken Shipp, SBS Head of Sport said: "Last night was an important night for football and for SBS and I'm thrilled to see such strong figures for the first Hyundai A-League match on SBS 2. Free-to-air TV coverage of the A-League is vital for the growth of football in Australia and I look forward to continuing to bring fans a live game every Friday night."

Iran, Saudi Power On As China, Iraq Struggle

Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman and United Arab Emirates have all consolidated their chances of reaching the 2015 AFC Asian Cup in Australia but China and Iraq are struggling.

Iran's 2-1 home victory over Thailand kept the World Cup finalist on top of Group B as nine matches on Tuesday (early Wednesday AEDT) brought the qualifying campaign to the halfway stage.

Three times Asian champion Saudi Arabia maintained its perfect record on top of Group C with a 2-0 victory over Iraq which leaves the 2007 champion second from bottom.

Iraq's only blessing is that China, attempting to reach the finals for the 11th successive time, failed to take maximum points away to bottom-of-the-table Indonesia.

Chinese coach Fu Bo described the 1-1 draw as disappointing. "We came here to take three points," he said after Indonesian captain Boaz Solossa's sweet half-volley cancelled out Wu Xi's lone goal for China.

China and Iraq are now likely to fight out the second guaranteed qualifying spot in the group when the qualifiers resume with two rounds in November ahead of the final round in March.

AFC ASIAN CUP

Paul Le Guen's Oman maintained its two-point advantage at the top of Group A after holding second-placed Jordan to a goalless draw in Amman.

Singapore stunned Syria 2-1 to climb off the bottom in the group's other encounter on Tuesday.

Lebanon kept its hopes alive with a 1-1 draw against Kuwait in Beirut.

An Ali Mabkhout hat-trick spearheaded a 4-0 win in Hong Kong that maintained UAE's perfect record in Group E while debutants Sardor Rashidov and Eldorbek Suyunov proved the inspiration in former finalist Uzbekistan's 3-1 victory over Vietnam.

Four teams – host Australia, defending champion Japan, South Korea and Korea DPR – have already qualified for the Asian Cup to be held in January 2015 in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Newcastle, with 12 other spots still up for grabs.

SCOREBOARD

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Adelaide United FC	1	1	0	0	3	1	+2	3
2 Sydney FC	1	1	0	0	2	0	+2	3
3 Brisbane Roar FC	1	1	0	0	2	1	+1	3
4 Central Coast Mariners FC	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
5 Western Sydney Wanderers	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
6 Melbourne Heart FC	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
7 Melbourne Victory FC	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
8 Wellington Phoenix FC	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
9 Perth Glory FC	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
10 Newcastle Jets FC	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

THIS WEEK

Round 2	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Fri Oct 18	Adelaide United v Melbourne Victory	Hindmarsh Stadium	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
Sat Oct 19	Melbourne Heart v Central Coast Mariners	AAMI Park	5:30 PM	5:30 PM
Sat Oct 19	Brisbane Roar v Sydney FC	Suncorp Stadium	6:30 PM	7:30 PM
Sun Oct 20	Newcastle Jets v Perth Glory	Hunter Stadium	3:00 PM	3:00 PM
Sun Oct 20	West Sydney Wanderers v Wellington Phoenix	Parramatta Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM

NEXT WEEK

Round 3	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Fri Oct 25	Melbourne Victory v Brisbane Roar	Etihad Stadium	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
Sat Oct 26	Central Coast Mariners v Adelaide United	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30 PM	5:30 PM
Sat Oct 26	Sydney FC v West Sydney Wanderers	Allianz Stadium	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
Sun Oct 27	Wellington Phoenix v Newcastle Jets	McLean Park, Napier	5:00 PM	3:00 PM
Sun Oct 27	Perth Glory v Melbourne Heart	NIB stadium	2:00 PM	5:00 PM

ROUND ONE

Sydney FC 2
(Del Piero 37', Chianese 60')
Newcastle Jets 0
Allianz Stadium
Crowd: 20,103

Central Coast Mariners 1
(Duke 55')
Western Sydney Wanderers 1
(Juric 87')
Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford
Attendance: 17,134

Melbourne Victory 0
Melbourne Heart 0
Etihad Stadium
Attendance: 45,202

Wellington Phoenix 1 (Stein Huysegems 22')
Brisbane Roar 2 (Besart Berisha 46', Ivan Franjic 90+2')
Westpac Stadium, Wellington

Adelaide United FC 3
(Jeronimo 9'/25', Ferreira 64')
Perth Glory 1 (Nagai 11')
Crowd: 10,320 @ Coopers Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

02
Jeronimo Naumann (Adelaide Utd)

01
Alessandro Del Piero (SFC)
Mitchell Duke (Mariners)
Tomi Juric (Wanderers)
Stein Huysegems (Phoenix)
Besart Berisha (Roar)
Ivan Franjic (Roar)
Fabio Ferriera (Adelaide Utd)
Ryo Nagai (Glory)

Unike the postman in Seinfield Adelaide United's Jeronimo Nauman delivered, not once but twice, in the opening round weekend.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK Round 1

Follow Steven Talevski on twitter @steventalevski.

Compiled by Steven Talevski

Alessandro Del Piero

After a long off season, the A-League finally came back and was hit with record crowds, record television audiences, excitement on the field and Goal! Weekly back in the stands!
Goal! Weekly returns with its Team of the Week special and is already throwing a bunch of new faces up with only one player, Alessandro Del Piero, from last seasons, Team of the Season, making the opening rounds best eleven.

GK: Justin Pasfield - Handed the number one jersey this season, Pasfield had a sublime game against the Wanderers with fantastic saves from a first half Mark Bridge strike and a second half Shinji Ono free kick.

RCB: Michael Boxall - With four players away on international duty, Boxall stepped in for the Phoenix and did no harm to his future starting berth claims with a solid defensive effort. Boxall also got forward and assisted Stein Huysegems with the games opener.

CB: Nikola Petkovic - The Serbian was cool, calm and collected in his A-League debut as he helped the Sky Blues to a clean sheet and three points.

LCB: Patrick Kisnorbo - After a decade in the United Kingdom, Kisnorbo returned home to Melbourne and had a solid defensive performance in the Melbourne Derby.

RDM: Leigh Broxham - The stand in Victory captain led his side well in front of a record Melbourne Derby crowd. Broxham was the league's leader with the most completed passes this round.

LDM: Manny Muscat - His side may have lost but Muscat's work ethic was second to none as the Maltese International made several key interceptions.

RAM: Fabio Ferreira - The Portuguese winger was one of Adelaide's best. Ferreira played a part in the red's first two goals before scoring their third in a 3-1 victory over the Glory.

CAM: Alessandro Del Piero - The Italian kicked off the season with a bang scoring Sydney's first before assisting Joel Chianese in the Sky Blues 2-1 victory over Newcastle.

LAM: Ivan Franjic - The Brisbane defender, turned attacker, had a fantastic game up the park against an under strength Wellington side that saw him net an injury time winner.

ST: Besart Berisha - Brisbane's number seven was at his best on the weekend, playing a part in a number of opportunities including scoring the Roar's equaliser.

ST: Jeronimo Neumann - A first half brace from the Argentine set alight Hindmarsh Stadium as he helped the Reds pick up a convincing victory against Perth.

Star Man: Alessandro Del Piero - The Sydney FC Marquee reminded everyone on the weekend why he is considered a legend of football. Del Piero was able to slot the Sky Blues opener after a Zenon Caravella defensive mistake before splitting the Jets defence up with a fantastic run through the midfield to play in Joel Chianese to double their lead. Age seems to be no barrier for El Capitano as season 2013/14 looms to be another big one for the Italian.

Coach: Frank Farina - After a disappointing string of results to end pre-season, Farina set out a compact Sky Blues line up that managed to pick up a first up win quite comfortably. Farina took a risk is his squad selection by starting the experienced Matt Thompson only two hours after he signed a short term deal. The risk paid off as Sydney controlled large portions of the game to cruise to a 2-0 victory.

SFC down Jets in season opener

Sydney FC 2

Newcastle Jets 0

Match Details

Sydney FC 2
(Del Piero 37', Chianese 60')
Newcastle Jets 0

Allianz Stadium
Crowd: 20,103
Referee: Jarred Gillett

Sydney Fc: 20. Vedran Janjetovic (Gk), 2. Sebastian Ryall, 3. Mark Warren, 6. Nikola Petkovic, 8. Pedj Bojic, 10. Alesssandro Del Piero©, 11. Richard Garcia(14. Mitchell Mallia 85'), 16. Joel Chianese (27. Christopher Naumoff 90'), 19. Nick Carle, 22. Ali Abbas, 28. Matthew Thompson (23. Rhyan Grant 69').

Subs Not Used: 1. Ivan Necevski(Gk), 5. Matthew Jurman.

Newcastle Jets: 1. Mark Birighltti (Gk), 2. Scott Neville, 4. Kew Jaliens, 6. Zenon Caravella (15. Joshua Brillante 64'), 8. Ruben Zadkovich©, 10. Nathan Burns, 11. Craig Goodwin, 12. Connor Chapman(16. Jacob Pepper 81'), 17. James Virgili (18. James Brown 64'), 21. Samuel Gallaway, 22. Adam Taggart.

Subs Not Used: 20. Ben Kennedy(Gk), 7. Andrew Hoole.

Yellow Card: Zenon Caravella 35'

By Bryson Ferreira

Sydney FC kicked off the new A-league season with a convincing 2-0 win over a disappointing Newcastle at Allianz Stadium on Friday night.

A 20,000 plus crowd witnessed one goal from the Italian master Alessandro Del Piero, and another from youngster Joel Chianese, who was set up by his Italian captain.

Frank Farina's new-look side will be optimistic after adopting a new possession based, pressing style of play in pre-season and producing in their opening match.

Despite having five new faces in the side including Marc Warren, Pedj Bojic, Nicola Petkovic, Richard Garcia and late injury replacement Matt Thompson, the team seemed to gel and work well together.

Both teams started off tentatively, with Sydney FC controlling possession without creating any clear-cut chances.

Sydney FC nearly took the lead in the 20th minute when Joel Chianese made a great tackle in his own box, before sprinting up field for the first of many counter attacks.

Alessandro Del Piero then played in Chianese who'd run the length of the field to receive the pass, but his touch let him down and Jets goalkeeper Mark Birighitti was able to smother the ball.

Minutes later Thompson was unlucky not to score on debut with a terrific volley from 25 metres, which cannoned off the crossbar hitting Birighitti in the back and falling away to safety.

Del Piero then scored on his debut as captain after pouncing on a Marc Warren tackle and running at the Jets defenders.

The Italian maestro took the ball into the box and looked to be covered by three Jets defenders, before making the most of some confusion between Caravella and Chapman and slotting the ball in the bottom corner.

Blue Heaven: Debutant Richard Garcia points the way for a happy crew of Sky Blues. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

From the first attack of the second half, the Sky Blues doubled their advantage.

Del Piero dispossessed Caravella on half way to give Sydney FC a 3 on 2 advantage.

The Italian drove forward before passing to the unmarked Chianese on the right edge of the box who struck a powerful shot into the top right corner of the net.

The Sky Blues then controlled the game from that point on, with Del Piero controlling most of the play alongside Nicky Carle and Ali Abbas in midfield.

Newcastle will be disappointed with their performance after starting the game reasonably well, before providing Sydney FC with two turnovers that lead to goals.

When they did have the ball the Jets seemed to pass the ball aimlessly and were toothless up front.

After vowing to provide their strikers with more opportunities this season, the Jets have a lot of work to do if they're going avoid missing the finals for the fourth consecutive year.

Sydney can now put a modest pre-season behind them, after receiving plenty of criticism for some poor performances.

Fans in the Cove will be feeling delighted with their teams performance, not only with the result, but the way they went about their business.

Structurally Sydney FC were excellent, a shade of their disorganized 2012-13 self.

The players that have been recruited have brought quality and so far, have bought into a system that should tighten up the defense and produce goals.

Nicola Petkovic looks like a solid centre half, a position that was troublesome for the Sky Blues last year.

Pedj Bojic also showed his class and experience as a championship-winning player from left back, providing another option going forward whilst remaining firm at the defense.

If Richard Garcia can remain fit he should also be an excellent signing for the Sky Blues, and was unlucky to miss out on a debut goal after being ruled offside.

With an opening round win, a new attractive style of play and the likes of Emerton, Antonis, Bosschaart and Gameiro to return, it's any wonder why Sydney FC fans are feeling optimistic in 2013-14.

Match Stats

293	Tackles	474
6	Total Shots	1
8	Total Passes	6
39.4%	Possession	60.6%
5	Corners	4
2	Offsides	4
6	Fouls committed	11

Man of the Match
Alessandro Del Piero (SFC)

Joel Chianese puts the icing on the cake with the second goal. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Ali Abbas embraces goalscorer Joel Chianese, but it's back to the drawing board for Ruben Zadkovic of the Jets. Photo: GEOFF JONES

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A Full House Beats a Sacked Coach

Central Coast 1

Western Sydney 1

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 1
(Duke 55')
Western Sydney Wanderers 1
(Juric 87')
Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford
Attendance: 17,134
Referee: Kris Griffiths-Jones

Central Coast Mariners: 1. Justin Pasfield (Gk), 3. Joshua Rose, 5. Zachary Anderson (4. Marcel Seip 79'), 7. John Hutchinson (C), 8. Nick Montgomery, 9. Mitchell Duke, 10. Marcos Flores (17. Anthony Caceres 79'), 11. Nick Fitzgerald, 15. Storm Roux, 16. Trent Sainsbury, 21. Mile Sterjovski (19. Matt Simon 66')

Substitutes Not Used: 6. Brent Griffiths, 12. Liam Reddy (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Nick Montgomery
Red Cards: Nil

Western Sydney Wanderers: 1. Ante Covic (Gk), 3. Adam D'apuzzo, 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5. Michael Beauchamp (C), 6. Jerome Polenz, 7. Labinot Haliti (9. Tomi Juric 52'), 8. Mateo Poljak (21. Shinji Ono 52'), 10. Aaron Mooy, 17. Youssouf Hersi, 19. Mark Bridge (11. Brendon Santalab 85'), 18. Iacopo La Rocca

Substitutes Not Used: 20. Jerrad Tyson (Gk), 22. Dean Heffernan
Yellow Cards: Mateo Poljak
Red Cards: Nil

By Adrian Deans

The two best teams from Season 8 flew out of the blocks at Bluetongue on Saturday evening and, despite a bit of rust, put on an entertaining show in front of a full house.

That's right…a full house, but I'll come back to that. The really surprising thing for me was that no-one was talking about the dramatic events of hours earlier when David Gallop said 'Auf Wiedersehen' to Holger Osieck after yet another hapless drubbing for the National Team.

Instead, there was nothing but excitement for the resumption of the A-League. The Red and Black Bloc massed on the borders of Bluetongue and swarmed into the stadium like conquerors. But they were met, and even outnumbered by the Yellow Army, which gave as good as they got, both on the pitch and off.

Without seven players from last season's Grand Final, Graham Arnold had to cobble together a competitive team from what was left, plus a handful of newcomers. And when you look at how successfully he does that, year in year out, the FFA need look no further if they want a coach who knows how to construct a system to suit the players he has at his disposal.

Unlike the Mariners, the Wanderers were significantly strengthened – all the best players from last year PLUS Youssouf Hersi who'd missed the Grand Final, PLUS Tomi Juric and Brendan Santalab. The Wanderers were so bristling with ability they could afford the luxury of starting with their new strikers on the bench with, of all people, Shinji Ono!

The Wanderers dominated possession early and the Mariners struggled to find an outlet. The Wanderers have so much pace across the park they can afford to press high with the knowledge they have the speed to recover in most situations if the enemy slip the trap. The Mariners were able to withstand the pressure (mostly) but I can see the Wanderers handing out a few hidings this year to defences less organised and resilient.

Central Coast Mariners Strorm Roux made a fine debut and attempts to lose his marker Adam D'Appuzzo of the Wanderers. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

The best chance of the first half came when Justin Pasfield made a superb triple save from point blank to keep the Mariners on par. Moments earlier, Storm Roux got in behind down the other end but only a brilliant sliding block from Topor-Stanley prevented Fitzgerald from putting the home team ahead.

We hadn't seen a great deal from Mariners marquee Marcos Flores in the first half, but he reminded all of his quality in the 51st minute when playing a sublime ball down the inside right channel for Mitchell Duke who chipped past the onrushing Covic.

Cue pandemonium on the terraces.

In response, the Wanderers lifted – bringing on Shinji, Juric and Santalab as the RBB roared their encouragement in what must be described as a fairly spectacular display – even if that 'Who do we sing for?' chant does get a little tedious after an hour or so.

Pasfield made another couple of excellent saves to keep the Mariners' noses in front, but then Flores was forced from the field after (seemingly) twisting his knee putting Nick Fitzgerald through the same channel that Duke had scored from earlier.

Enter former crowd favourite Matt Simon to a loud ovation from the Yellow Army, and the tension was excruciating as the game wound towards its white-knuckled conclusion.

Then came the moment which infuriated the home fans – Hersi was away down the right holding off Rose by the shorts – right under the linesman's nose, but was allowed to continue. That was all the advantage he needed and delivered the sweetest of crosses into the path of Tomi Juric who couldn't miss from six metres.

Heartbreak for the Mariners with just minutes to go, but in all fairness, the Wanderers deserved at least a point and, on balance, were probably the better team.

The Mariners desperately missed McGlinchey (on international duty for New Zealand) but are clearly on track to take up once again where they left off despite such massive turnover of playing staff. The greatest danger for the Mariners this year is if Arnie is suddenly raised up to higher duties – which I would suggest he fully deserves.

And the full house? How is 17,130 a full house in a ground that holds over 20,000? I know numerous people who couldn't get in, who were then incensed to see so many empty seats on the TV. Is this some nanny-state idea to 'prevent another Hillsborough' because the RBB were in town? If not, what madness inspired the powers-that-be to lock over three thousand paying customers out of the ground?

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets and more recently Straight Jacket – published by High Horse Books and available in all good book stores. www.adriandeans.com

Match Stats

19	Tackles	21
7	Total Shots	14
427	Total Passes	445
49%	Possession	51%
3	Corners	6
1	Offsides	2
15	Fouls committed	14

Man of the Match
Dean Heffernan (Perth Glory)

Mitchell Duke is on target for the reigning champs. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

No love lost her between last year's grand finalists. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

GW Goes Big Wednesday

As from next week, GW will be available from newsagents every Wednesday.

We just couldn't wait for the weekend to arrive either.

GOAL! WEEKLY

Much anticipated Derby falls flat

By Andrew Bishara

Melbourne Victory 0

Melbourne heart 0

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 0
Melbourne Heart 0
Etihad Stadium
Referee: Peter Green
Attendance: 45,202

Melbourne Victory: 1. Nathan Coe, 2. Pablo Contreras, 3. Adama Traore, 6. Leigh Broxham, 10. Archie Thompson (13. Andrew Nabbout), 11. Connor Pain, 14. James Troisi (24. Scott Galloway 82'), 15. Mitch Nichols, 16. Rashid Mahazi (7. Gui Finkler 80'), 23. Adrian Leijer, 25. Jason Geria

Substitutes Not Used: 20. Lawrence Thomas, 4. Nicholas Ansell,
Yellow Cards: Leijer 17', Mahazi 40', Broxham 53', TraOre 57'
Red Cards: Nil

Melbourne Heart: 1. Andrew Redmayne, 3. Robbie Wielaert, 8. Massimo Murdocca, 10. Harry Kewell (7. Iain Ramsey 68'), 14. Golgol Mebrahtu, 15. David Williams, 16. Aziz Behich, 17. Jason Hoffman, 23. Mate Duganzdic (22. Nicholas Kalmar 87'), 24. Patrick Kisnorbo, 25. Andrea Migliorini

Subsititues Not Used: 20. Tando Velaphi, 6. Patrick Gerhardt, 28. Paulo Retre
Yellow Cards: Kisnorbo 11', Wielaert 61',
Red Cards: Nil

Match Stats

14	Tackles	22
9	Total Shots	9
601	Total Passes	323
62%	Possession	36%
5	Corners	6
0	Offsides	5
18	Fouls committed	15

Man of the Match
David Williams (Heart)

The first Melbourne Derby of the 2013/14 A-League season ended scoreless, with both sides content to share the points.

Both teams came off the back of mixed pre-season results and were looking to kick start their season with season with a win over their bitter rivals, in front of a crowd of 45,202 at Etihad Stadium.

But the game's opening frantic pace, petered out in the second half, as Ange Postecoglou's Victory controlled possession, with John Aloisi's troops content to play on the break.

The game also marked the return of Harry Kewell to the A-League and Aloisi had no issues throwing the striker right into the starting eleven. The Heart named five new debutants to the team, including Kewell, Andrea Migliorini, Massimo Murdooca, Rob Wielaert and former Socceroo Patrick Kisnorbo.

Victory also named four new members to the team, including Mitch Nichols, Rashid Mahazi, James Troisi and marquee signing Pablo Contreras. Setting up in a 4-2-4 formation, the Victory were happy to control the game, but it was the Heart who had the first chance of the game.

David Williams found himself clear on the left wing and squared a ball for Mate Dugandzic, but the winger sliced his shot wide of the goals.

Moments later, Heart were at again with Golgol Mebrahtu finding himself one-on-one with Nathan Coe, after a splitting ball from Kewell. Rounding the Victory 'keeper, Mebrahtu's shot lack the power as the Victory cleared the ball off the line.

Victory responded courtesy of former captain Adrian Leijer. A corner from Mitch Nichols saw the ball land on the feet of Leijer, who's close range shot was miraculously saved by Heart 'keeper Andrew Redmayne.

Leigh Broxham forced another save from Redmayne soon after, when he collected a poor Kisnorbo clearance and struck his shot right to the Heart 'keeper.

Just before the break, Australia's Golden Boy, Kewell turned up the heat, by striking a first-time shot that just bounced wide of goals; then setting up Mebrahtu, by heading the ball down to the striker who narrowly missed with the volley.

The second half began with controversy when referee Peter Green failed to award the Victory a penalty in what looked like a handball by Kisnorbo in the box.

A minute later, the game threaten to explode, when marquee signing Contreras looked to upended Aziz Behich, but Green didn't see the incident.

As the Victory continued to push forward, Archie Thompson found himself with a chance to win the game with 15 minutes left.

Leaping high, Thompson misdirected his header after perfect cross from Troisi, missing a goal he has scored plenty of times before.

The game continued to follow the same pattern, as the Victory looked to break through a rock solid Heart defence, but the game sputtered and ended on a dull note.

Next week, the Victory will travel to face off with traditional rivals Adelaide United at Coopers Stadium on Friday night. The Heart face the daunting task of hosting champions Central Coast Mariners at AAMI Park on Saturday evening.

Archie Thompson goes down in the box and his appeal falls on deaf ears. Photo: ROMEL AMERIKHAS

Andrew Nabbout and Aziz Behich fly high in the derby. Photo: ROMEL AMERIKHAS

Harry Kewell was in the thick of the action and had the battle-scars to prove it. Photo: ROMEL AMERIKHAS

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Roar pinches points at the death

Wellington Phoenix 1

Brisbane Roar 2

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 1 (Stein Huysegems 22')
Brisbane Roar 2 (Besart Berisha 46', Ivan Franjic 90+2')
Sunday, 13 October 2013
Westpac Stadium, Wellington
Referee: Tim Mcgilchrist

Wellington Phoenix: 2. Manny Muscat, 3. Reece Caira, 4. Luke Adams (13. Albert Riera 55'), 5. Michael Boxall, 9. Kenny Cunningham (8. Paul Ifill 55'), 10. Stein Huysegems (12. Tyler Boyd 84'), 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund, 21. Carlos Hernandez, 25. Jason Hicks, 30. Jacob Spoonley (Gk),

Substitutes Not Used: 24. Hamish Watson, 40. James Mcpeake (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Carlos Hernandez 35', Manny Muscat 37', Jacob Spoonley 41'
Red Cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theo (Gk), 2. Matthew Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 7. Besart Berisha, 11. Liam Miller, 13. Jade North, 18. Luke Brattan, 19. Jack Hingert, 22. Thomas Broich, 29. Kwame Yeboah (10. Henrique 62')

Substitutes Not Used: 15. James Donachie, 20. Matthew Acton (Gk), 26. Corey Brown, 28. Brandon Borrello
Yellow Cards: Luke Brattan 28'
Red Cards: Nil

Man of the Match
Thomas Broich (Roar)

By Joe Gallagher

Wellington Phoenix might have paid a cruel price for their inexperience on Sunday afternoon after a last-gasp Ivan Franjic goal consigned them to a 2-1 loss in their first hit out of the 2013/14 season.

It is a cardinal sin in football to concede goals immediately before – and immediately after – an interval but Franjic's calm finish, teamed with a Besart Berisha strike in the opening minute of the second spell, was precisely what killed the Phoenix after they took the lead through Stein Huysegems.

Their sinning might have been even worse had a Berisha header not been chalked out for offside in first half stoppage time.

The new Phoenix coach, Ernie Merrick, was forced to play a rookie Phoenix team against last season's semi-finalists, handing starting debuts to Reece Caira, Luke Adams, Carlos Hernandez, Kenny Cunningham and Jason Hicks.

In a surprise move, he left the talismanic yet injury-prone Paul Ifill on the bench – a decision which will almost certainly prompt speculation over the way the Barbadan will be used by Merrick this season.

But the fresh-faced hosts actually started promisingly, out-passing a Brisbane team that had become renowned for its ability to retain possession at will in recent years. Hernandez in particular was impressive, providing the spark through which every Phoenix attack seemed to emanate.

The first half was largely scrappy but entertaining. Foul after foul, theatrical dive after another, it took a tidy Huysegems finish to inject some energy into the match.

Ben Sigmund – Wellington's captain for the day – lifted a long ball into the Roar area which was nodded perfectly into the path of the Belgian by his partner at the heart of defence, Michael Boxall. Huysegems' finish past Michael Theo was little more than a formality and the hosts had handed their new gaffer the perfect start.

But they nearly suffered what would have been their first coach-killer moments later, when Franjic – who was one of Brisbane's best on the day – danced inside the area and struck the woodwork, only a narrow Sigmund deflection sparing the hosts' blushes.

Stein Huysegems scores the opening goal of the match for Wellington Phoenix. PHOTOS: PETER McDONALD

Merrick might have been at the point of pulling his hair out when he saw his third-string goalkeeper Jacob Spoonley pick the ball up while outside the penalty area, an error for which the Kiwi was cautioned.

Wellington might have doubled their lead had Theo not denied Cunningham on two separate occasions. The Costa Rican could be forgiven driving his angled shot straight at the stopper, but his first effort was a gilt-edged opportunity that he – and the Phoenix – ultimately will rue.

Berisha, a worrying culprit for the aforementioned theatrics, was twice thwarted by Spoonley before he finally placed the ball in the net. His header from a superb Franjic delivery was correctly adjudged to have been offside, despite his pleas otherwise.

He may have gone into the sheds feeling down on his luck, but the 14-goal scorer last season didn't need long after oranges to make his presence felt.

Once again, Franjic broke down the left and had plenty of time and space to tee up the Albanian. Spoonley had been expertly drawn out of position by Franjic, and Berisha could scarcely miss. It was no unfamiliar sight for the Yellow Fever; Berisha has now scored in each of his last five outings against the Phoenix.

If the equaliser did anything, it was liven the game up.

Ifill, a second half substitute, forced Theo into a smart save, Hernandez blazed over from inside the area, and Huysegems side-footed straight at the goalkeeper after colliding with Ifill from 18 yards.

The Roar came agonisingly close when Franjic's header struck the crossbar – perhaps off the fingertips of Spoonley – mid-way through the half.

The game and its momentum had swung from one end to the other before the match's decisive moment in the 92nd minute.

Franjic had certainly deserved his goal, but Wellington did not deserve to lose in such a fashion. Calamitous defending gifted Broich a chance, and while his effort rebounded off the post, Franjic was on hand to poke home the rebound.

It spoke volumes about the Phoenix's effort that while Brisbane celebrated, half a dozen bodies in yellow and black lay strewn across the Westpac Stadium turf.

It was the first time Wellington have taken the lead and lost at their home, and the nature of the loss will truly sting. Perhaps their effort hadn't deserved a victory, but it certainly hadn't warranted such a heartbreaking loss.

Match Stats

13	Tackles	14
4	Total Shots	4
354	Total Passes	451
45%	Possession	55%
6	Corners	5
6	Offsides	1
22	Fouls committed	7

Merrick will be encouraged by the performances of his Costa Rican signings, and though he downplayed its significance post-match, the absence of a genuine first-choice right-back seriously showed.

He will be delighted to welcome back a host of first-choice players next week, but might look upon a trip to Parramatta anxiously.

Mike Mulvey will be thrilled with the character of his side, as he prepares for a visit by Sydney FC next weekend in Brisbane.

Costa Rican international Kenny Cunningham goes sprawling to the ground after some close attention from Luke Brattan. Photo: PETER McDONALD

Carlos Hernandez make a return to the A-League after a stint in india. Photo: PETER McDONALD

Winning start to El Gombau's reign

Adelaide United

3

Perth Glory

1

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 3
(Jeronimo 9'/25', Ferreira 64')
Perth Glory 1 (Nagai 11')
Referee: Ben Williams
Crowd: 10,320 @ Coopers Stadium

Adelaide United: 1. Eugene Galekovic (Gk) (C), 3. Nigel Boogaard, 4. Jon Mckain, 7. Jeronimo (24. Brent Mcgrath 76'), 8. Isaias, 9. Sergio Cirio, 10. Marcelo Carrusca, 13. Steven Lustica (5. Osama Malik 61'), 16. Daniel Bowles, 18. Michael Zullo, 22. Fabio Ferreira (21. Tarek Elrich 69')

Substitutes Not Used: 17. Awer Mabil, 20. Paul Izzo (Gk)
Yellow Cards: FErreira 33', Mckain 72', Bowles 74', Jeronimo 75'
Red Cards: Isaias 65', Boogaard 79'

Perth Glory: 1. Daniel Vukovic (Gk), 3. Brandon O'neill, 4. Ryan Edwards, 5. Steve Pantelidis, 7. Jacob Burns, 8. Ryo Nagai, 10. Jamie Maclaren, 14. Steven Mcgarry (20. Daniel De Silva 71'), 16. Sidnei Sciola Moraes (11. Adrian Zahra 73'),19. Joshua Risdon, 21. Scott Jamieson

Substitutes Not Used: 2. Jack Clisby, 6. Cameron Edwards, 30. Devon Spence (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Risdon 26', Burns 28', Edwards 70', DE Silva 90'
Red Cards: Nil

By Nic Kerber

Adelaide United FC Head Coach Josep Gombau's first Hyundai A-League game in charge has produced a drama filled 3-1 win over Perth Glory at Coopers Stadium.

In a match that featured four goals, numerous chances, two red cards and countless yellows, the Reds started their 2013/14 season off under Gombau in victorious style as a first half brace from Jeronimo and a 64th minute Fabio Ferreira strike proved enough in the end to see off the Glory challenge.

"I am so happy today, not for the way that we played because I don't think we played a very good game in terms of the style we want to play…it is normal for the first game, but I am satisfied for the attitude they showed – they brought 120 per cent," Gamobau said.

"We played the last 10-15 minutes with nine players and this is difficult, and they fought and ran and for me this is the best because the other things you can improve in training but the attitude is something you either have or don't have – and they have it."

The only sour note for the Reds was the send offs of midfielder Isaias and defender Nigel Boogaard for second bookable offences, which left United with nine men for the final 115 minutes but more significantly without the duo for Friday night's blockbuster against Melbourne Victory.

With both coaches promising to play attractive, possession based football, it suggested there would be plenty of goal mouth action and in practically the teams' first two forays forward, there were goals at either end.

Clever work from Daniel Bowles down the right resulted in him driving the ball into the penalty area and after taking enough of a flick on from Ferreira, it came to Jeronimo who slid it past the outstretched Danny Vukovic to open his goal scoring account for Season 9.

But within 90 seconds Perth were level as their South American Sidnei Sciola Moraes found Ryo Nagai unmarked, Eugene Galekovic and Nigel Boogaard unable to keep his well aimed header from sneaking into the back of the net.

Sidnei went close again with a couple of venomous efforts but as the Reds soaked up the pressure, Ferreira and Jeronimo combined again to restore the Reds' advantage, the Argentine pouncing after Vukovic failed to deal with Ferreira's initial header from a Sergio Cirio cross.

The only way the Glory seemed to be able to curb Jeronimo's influence was when a wayward boot from Steve Pantelidis struck the pint sized forward in the forehead which required some medical attention.

Perth had the first chance of the second half when Jamie Maclaren beat the offside trap but sent his shot wide with just Galekovic to beat, and Ferreira would make him pay as he cleverly flicked in a tantalising Michael Zullo cross with the outside of his boot to make it 3-1.

But the Reds' two goal buffer was anything but safe when Isaias, and then Boogaard, were given their marching orders with enough time remaining for Perth to make a comeback.

However, the Reds defended astutely to see them top of the table at the conclusion of Round 1.

The Reds are off to a flyer in the opening round and Fabio Farreira scores to make it a resounding first-day-of-the-season win. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Match Stats		
22	Tackles	20
8	Total Shots	11
399	Total Passes	364
52%	Possession	48%
3	Corners	4
0	Offsides	3
25	Fouls committed	17

Man of the Match
Jeronimo Naumann (AUFC)

Adelaide United custodian Eugene Galekovic holds firm as an attempt on his goals flies over the crossbar. Photo ADAM BUTLER

Referee Ben Williams had his hands full in a fiery clash and dished out no less than 12 cards. Nigel Boogaard (3) sees red and gets his marching orders. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Photos: KAREN DOUGLAS, GEOFF JONES, ROMEL AMERIKHAS, PETER McDONALD, ADAM BUTLER

Adelaide United v Melbourne Victory

Fri Oct 18 Hindmarsh Stdm 7:30 PM

Adelaide Utd Line Up

1. Eugene GALEKOVIC (GK) (c)
4. Jon McKAIN
5. Osama MALIK
7. JERONIMO
9. Sergio CIRIO
10. Marcelo CARRUSCA
12. Antony GOLEC
13. Steven LUSTICA
14. Cameron WATSON
16. Daniel BOWLES
17. Awer MABIL
18. Michael ZULLO
19. Jake BARKER-DAISH
21. Tarek ELRICH
22. Fabio FERREIRA
23. Jordan ELSEY
24. Brent McGRATH
30. John HALL (GK)
(two to be omitted)

Ins: 12. Antony GOLEC, 14. Cameron WATSON, 19. Jake BARKER-DAISH, 23. Jordan ELSEY, 30. John HALL (GK) (all promoted)

Outs: 3. Nigel BOOGAARD (suspended, 1 week), 8. ISAIAS (suspended, 1 week), 20. Paul IZZO (GK) (omitted)
Unavailable: CASSIO (quad – 3-4 weeks), Bruce DJITE (ankle – 4-5 weeks)

Rampant Reds ready for visiting Victory

Matt Mays

Adelaide United will be hoping to celebrate the anniversary of their 10 years as a professional club on Friday as they entertain rivals Melbourne Victory at Coopers Stadium. What a fitting way to remember and celebrate the occasion with a tasty interstate derby.

United will even be wearing a special commemorative kit for the night. A special red and gold strip almost identical to the one they wore against the Brisbane Strikers back in 2004.

But besides the celebrations and tribulations, there is a game of football to be played. Despite the fact it's only round two, there will be a lot riding on this one. Bragging rights and momentum spring to mind.

A win for Adelaide would maintain their unbeaten start to the season but they are going to have to do things the hard way - without their key men from match day one.

Both Boogard and Isais, who both shone magnificently in the win over Perth Glory, will watch the game from the stands after picking up needless suspensions.

Another name to shine in round one, Jeronimo Neumann, has come out and defended his teams discipline despite them picking up 8 yellows which lead to 2 reds.

"It's a little bit of a concern and we need to improve on that but I think everyone was a little bit nervous trying to make a good impression. The next match will be a lot better for us."

The last time the sides met, Neumann netted the only goal of the game in a 1-0 win.

Melbourne Victory have problems of their own and the timing of this match could not really have come at a worse time.

Speculation continues regarding the link between Victory boss Ange Postecoglou and the vacant Socceroos job, and after a lacklustre round one bore draw against neighbours Heart, the pressure will be on them.

Melbourne Victory are said to have been made aware with the interest from the FFA regarding the interest in Postecoglou, but whatever happens the boss will remain at Victory until the end of this A League season before next summers showcase in Brazil.

Defender Pablo Contreras has been suspended for two matches after an elbow was spotted and seen by an FFA review panel as deliberate "assault on the player."

With all the hype surrounding Adelaide's new playing style, and the rivalry between the two sides, this is sure to be one of the best interstate derby's in recent seasons. There is expected to be a souring crowd at Coopers too, with the Reds issuing a statement as early as Wednesday asking fans to be aware that two stands where sold out.

KISS OF DEATH - Never have I seen such excitement surrounding Adelaide United like this in recent seasons. Of course these are early days, but everything at the club seems to be on the up. Confidence, and a big crowd, will prevail, and leave Victory lagging behind.

The Odds	Head-to-Head
Adelaide 2.50 Draw 3.40 Victory 2.75	Played 30 Victory 15 Adelaide 10 Draw 5

Referee: Alan Milliner

Radio Broadcast: 7.30pm (AEDT) Live coverage on ABC 891 Adelaide, ABC Local Radio South Australia, ABC Local Radio Tasmania, Grandstand Digital and Online/Mobile phone app

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #ADLvMVC

Kiss of Death
AUFC 3-1 Victory

Victory Line Up

1. Nathan COE (GK)
3. Adama TRAORE
4.Nick ANSELL
5. Mark MILLIGAN (c)
6. Leigh BROXHAM
7. Gui FINKLER
9. Kosta BARBAROUSES
10. Archie THOMPSON
11. Connor PAIN
13. Andrew NABBOUT
14. James TROISI
15. Mitch NICHOLS
16. Rashid MAHAZI
17. Jimmy JEGGO
20. Lawrence THOMAS
23. Adrian LEIJER
24, Scott GALLOWAY
25, Jason GERIA
(two to be omitted)

Ins: 5. Mark MILLIGAN, 9. Kosta BARBAROUSES (return from international duty)

Outs: 2. Pablo CONTRERAS (suspended – 2 games)
Unavailable: 2. Pablo CONTRERAS (suspended – 2 games)

Melbourne Heart v CC Mariners

Sat Oct 19 AAMI Park 5:30 PM

Heart Line Up

1. Andrew Redmayne (Gk)
3. Robbie Wielaert
6. Patrick Gerhardt
7. Iain Ramsay
8. Massimo Murdocca
10. Harry Kewell (Captain)
14. Golgol Mebrahtu
15. David Williams
16. Aziz Behich
17. Jason Hoffman
18. David Vrankovic
19. Benjamin Garuccio
20. Tando Velaphi (Gk)
21. Stefan Mauk
22. Nick Kalmar
23. Mate Dugandzic
24. Patrick Kisnorbo
25. Andrea Migliorini
(Two To Be Omitted)

Ins: 19. Benjamin Garuccio (Returns From International Duty), 21. Stefan Mauk (Returns From International Duty)
Outs: Nil
UnavailablE: 2. Jeremy Walker, 4. Orlando Engelaar (Fractured Tibia – Long-Term), 5. Sam Mitchinson, 9. Dylan Macallister (Hamstring – 3-6 Weeks), 11. Michael Mifsud, 13. Jonatan Germano (Hamstring – Two Weeks)

Heart await Champs

Adrian Houghton

After a much-hyped Round 1 meeting with local rivals Melbourne Victory, the Melbourne Heart played out a tepid 0-0 draw.

Another game with a similar billing was the Grand Final rematch between the Central Coast Mariners and Western Sydney Wanderers at Gosford, which ended 1-1 after a late equalising goal from the visitors' Tomi Juric.

Although the season is just a week old, there's plenty to like about both teams.

For the Melbourne Heart it was their new look rearguard that would have been most pleasing for coach John Aloisi.

New recruit and former Leeds United defender Patrick Kisnorbo was crucial to the Heart preserving a clean sheet against Victory.

Playing alongside fellow off-season inclusion Robbie Wielart, the pair were dominant in the air and comfortable on the ball.

Marquee signing Harry Kewell turned in a solid performance against his former team, showing glimpses of his fine technical ability.

Aside from the ex-Liverpool man, Mate Dugandzic will be better for the run out last week, following a return from a long layoff with a severe foot injury.

The 23-year-old attacking midfielder will be vital to helping unlock a stubborn and resolute Central Coast defence marshalled by impressive starlet Trent Sainsbury.

His teammate David Williams was one of his team's best attacking outlets in the opening clash, providing pace and trickery.

Amid the speculation and conjecture surrounding a potential Socceroos role, Graham Arnold must focus on the task at hand this weekend.

His side looked vibrant in patches against Western Sydney Wanderers last week, and will be desperate to make an early season statement to the rest of the competition.

Marcos Flores made a fine start to life with the Gosford outfit, laying a cute pass on for young gun Mitchell Duke for the side's first goal of the campaign.

The 27-year-old Argentinean experienced significant troubles with previous employers Melbourne Victory, and the move already appears to have reinvigorated the attacking midfielder.

With the expected return of Michael McGlinchey this weekend, it will be the first opportunity to see the pair work in tandem and create what Mariners' fans hope is a formidable creative duo.

Storm Roux, 20, made a superb debut for the Mariners, keeping danger man Mark Bridge at bay and also providing good attacking width from the right-back position.

The Odds	Head-to-Head
Heart 3.20 Draw 3.40 Mariners 2.20	Played 9 Heart 1 Mariners 7 Draw 1

Referee: Ben Williams

Radio Broadcast: 5.30pm (AEDT) Live coverage on ABC 774 Melbourne, ABC Local Radio Victoria, 92.5 ABC Central Coast, Grandstand Digital Melbourne and Online/Mobile phone app

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #MHTvCCM

Kiss of Death
Heart 1-1 Mariners

In between the sticks the Central Coast shot-stopper Justin Pasfield was on his game, the highlight being an outrageous triple save to thwart the Wanderers.

The aforementioned Duke's star continues to rise, as he strives to claim a spot at the World Cup.

Ahead of the match the Heart received some troubling news that Kewell could miss through whiplash that he suffered last weekend.

The veteran will face a fitness test to determine his availability.

For the Mariners, last season's top scorer Danny McBreen is still away on his loan spell and will be back with the squad after the completion of Round Four.

Mariners Line Up

1. Justin PASFIELD (GK)
3. Joshua ROSE
4. Marcel SEIP
5. Zachary ANDERSON
6. Brent GRIFFITHS
7. John HUTCHINSON (C)
8. Nick MONTGOMERY
9. Mitchell DUKE
10. Marcos FLORES
11. Nick FITZGERALD
12. Liam REDDY (GK)
13. Hayden MORTON
15. Storm ROUX
16. Trent SAINSBURY
17. Anthony CACERES
18. Michael NEILL
19. Matt SIMON
21. Mile STERJOVSKI (two to be omitted)

Ins: 13. Hayden MORTON, 18. Michael NEILL
Outs: Nil
Unavailable: 2. Daniel MCBREEN (On loan at Shanghai SIPG until October 31), 14. Michael MCGLINCHEY (International Duty, New Zealand All Whites), 23. Adam KWASNIK (Groin – 1 week)

GW Goes Big Wednesday

As from next week, GW will be available from newsagents every Wednesday.

We just couldn't wait for the weekend to arrive either.

GOAL! WEEKLY

Brisbane Roar v Sydney FC

Sat Oct 19 Suncorp Stadium 7:30 PM

Roar Line Up

1. Michael THEO (gk)
2. Matthew SMITH (c)
3. Shane STEFANUTTO
5. Ivan FRANJIC
7. Besart BERISHA
10. HENRIQUE
11. Liam MILLER
13. Jade NORTH
14. Diogo FERREIRA
15. James DONACHIE
18. Luke BRATTAN
19. Jack HINGERT
29. Matthew ACTON (gk)
22. Thomas BROICH
23. Dimitri PETRATOS
26. Corey BROWN
28. Brandon BORRELLO
29. Kwame YEBOAH
(two to be omitted)

Ins: 14. Diogo FERREIRA, 23. Dimitri PETRATOS

Unavailable: George LAMBADARDIS (knee - season)

SFC's Roar Blues to Continue?

Jarrod Ellis

After a record breaking first round of fixtures Season 9 of the A-League continues this week, Brisbane playing host to Sydney this Saturday in one of the highlights of the weekend.

Both teams began their seasons with three-points, a valuable commodity given how competitive the race for the Premiership and a finals place is expected to be.

Brisbane scraped their way to a last-gasp 2-1 victory over Wellington Phoenix whilst the night before Sydney produced a display of confidence and determination to secure a 2-0 win over Newcastle.

Both will be looking to continue their winning start to the season when they take to the pitch at Suncorp Stadium early Saturday evening.

The two sides met in preseason last month and Brisbane ran rampant, leaving Cairns with a well-deserved 4-1 win. Preseason matches are traditionally derided as having little bearing on the real thing but the Roar will have gained confidence for this week's meeting and given Sydney's record against Brisbane away from the SFS is less than enviable.

Matches north of the border have been a struggle for the Sky Blues the past few seasons, the most recent A-League match ended in a 3-1 defeat for the visitors, effectively ending any hope they had of finals football.

Results like that have become commonplace for Sydney, the southerners not having recorded a win at Suncorp Stadium since 2007 and collecting only four points from the last thirty on offer at the aforementioned venue.

In order for that record to improve Sydney will need to be on top of its game and hope that Alessandro Del Piero can replicate the kind of display that put Newcastle to the sword on the opening weekend.

Happily for Sydney FC and its supporters Del Piero has made a habit of scoring against Brisbane, getting his name on the scoresheet on all three occasions that the two sides met last season.

Brisbane itself will have to do more than simply turn up, this Sydney team is by no means the disorganised rabble that began last season under Ian Crook. Frank Farina and Rado Vidosic are now at the helm for Sydney and the former Brisbane connection will doubtlessly want to get one over their old club.

Roar has its own talismanic striker to rely on in Besart Berisha, the Albanian off the mark already this season in a trademark display of both penalty area predation and some ever so slightly heavy first touches that passed up further scoring opportunities.

Brisbane's midfield is its strength this season but produced a passing game that was slow and ponderous at times against Wellington Phoenix. Whether that will be a recurring problem for the Roar remains to be seen but should it continue then Berisha may find his service in the box increasingly irregular.

The return of Matt McKay from international duty should help in that regard and the match will mark the first time that McKay has played in the A-League since the 2011 Grand Final.

It's still early days and the A-League is notoriously difficult to predict but with Sydney traditional slow starters and possessing a less than enviable record in Brisbane

The Odds	Head-to-Head
Roar 1.67 Draw 3.75 Sydney 5.00	Played 26 Roar 11 SFC 7 Draw 8

Referee: Peter Green

Radio Broadcast: 7.45pm (AEDT) Live broadcast on ABC 612 Brisbane, ABC Local Radio Queensland, ABC 702 Sydney,

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #BRIvSYD

Kiss of Death
Roar 2-1 Sydney FC

Sydney FC Line Up

1. Ivan NECEVSKI (GK)
2. Seb RYALL
3. Mark WARREN
5. Matt JURMAN
6. Nikola PETKOVIC
7. Brett EMERTON
8. Predrag BOJIC
10. Alessandro DEL PIERO
11. Richard GARCIA
14. Mitchell MALLIA
16. Joel CHIANESE
19. Nicky CARLE
20. Vedran JANJETOVIC (GK)
22. Ali ABBAS
23. Rhyan GRANT
27. Chris NAUMOFF
28. Matt THOMPSON (one to be omitted)

Ins: 7. Brett EMERTON (return from injury).
Outs: Not Applicable
Unavailable: Terry MCFLYNN (Groin – 2 weeks), Peter TRIANTIS (groin - long term), Terry ANTONIS (thigh – long term), Pascal BOSSCHAART (ankle – long term), Corey GAMEIRO (knee – 3 weeks), (Yairo YAU – international duty), Blake POWELL (youth team duty), Josh MACDONALD (youth team duty)

Newcastle Jets v Perth Glory

Sun Oct 20 Hunter Stadium 3:00 PM

Jets Line Up

1. Mark BIRIGHITTI (GK)
2. Scott NEVILLE
4. Kew JALIENS
6. Zenon CARAVELLA
7. Andrew HOOLE
8. Ruben ZADKOVICH
10. Nathan BURNS
11. Craig GOODWIN
12. Connor CHAPMAN
13. Joey GIBBS
15. Josh BRILLANTE
16. Jacob PEPPER
17. James VIRGILI
18. James BROWN
19. Michael BRIDGES
20. Ben KENNEDY
21. Sam GALLAWAY
22. Adam TAGGART
(two to be omitted)

Ins: Joey GIBBS (returns from illness), Michael BRIDGES (returns from injury)

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: Emile HESKEY (knee – 3 to 4 weeks), Mitch COOPER (knee – long term).

Early pressure builds after slow start

Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets face the Perth Glory this Sunday afternoon at Hunter Stadium with the home side under intense pressure.

The local Novocastrian fans, normally behind their team whatever the situation, are up in arms.

Across fan forums and blogs Newcastle wide, the fans are up in arms after the seemingly meek capitulation to Sydney FC in the opening round of the A-League.

Jets fans were promised an open and attacking brand of football that would lead to many chances and domination of games, what they were given was an alarming taste of the usual.

Newcastle struggled to assert any pressure on the Sydney defence and looked vulnerable every time they turned over possession, leading to both Sydney goals.

This week they face a Glory outfit that come to town after a defeat in the opening round in Adelaide, but equipped with players that can capitalise on the home side's deficiencies.

Imports Ryo Nagai and Brazilian Sidnei Sciola were impressive against the Reds and were quick and lethal on the counter attack, as the goal showed, made by Sidnei, converted by Nagai.

Add to this the speed of players like Jamie MacLaren and the Glory have a potent cocktail that can be highly effective on the counter.

In an effort to combat this, the

home side will need to be more productive with the ball when they have it.

Official stats from last week showed that Newcastle had 58% possession, but could only translate that to one shot on target.

The ball from midfield into attack was often rushed and inaccurate, which led to turnovers in possession and both Sydney goals.

The returning Michael Bridges could provide the key in this area, with his calmness on the ball and ability to pick the right pass sorely missing from the Jets last week.

One player who will have to pick up his shoes for the home side is Zenon Caravella. He was at fault for both goals last week and with Newcastle having solid midfield depth this season, he will have to fire quickly or his place in the team will be under severe threat.

Newcastle has decided on a change in position for their major off-season signing Nathan Burns this week.

Bridges will return to the playmaking role in behind Young Socceroo Adam Taggart, shifting Burns to the right-hand side and relegating pacy young winger James Virgili to the bench.

The Jets need this change in personnel to work for them, as I just have a strange feeling that Perth will score this weekend due to the already mentioned weaknesses of the Jets in transition.

Newcastle was sluggish in the extreme last Friday night and will no doubt be looking forward to giving a better account of themselves in front of their home fans on Sunday.

With the pressure mounting on Gary Van Egmond and his team they will simply have to fire, or the scrutiny will only increase in coming weeks.

Newcastle dropped their first game last season before winning their second in that memorable occasion against Sydney at the Football Stadium.

This week though, I feel they will be happy with not losing the game and will likely draw the match.

The Odds	Head-to-Head
Jets 2.30 Draw 3.40 Glory 3.00	Played 24 Jets 6 Glory 13 Draw 5

Referee: Shaun Evans

Radio Broadcast: 3.00pm (AEDT) Live broadcast on ABC 1233 Newcastle, ABC 720 Perth, ABC Local Radio Western Australia, Grandstand Digital Perth and Online/Mobile phone app

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #NEWvPER

Kiss of Death
Jets 1-1 Glory

Glory Line Up

1. Daniel VUKOVIC (GK)
2. Jack CLISBY
3. Brandon O'NEILL
4. Ryan EDWARDS
5. Steve PANTELIDIS
6. Cameron EDWARDS
7. Jacob BURNS
8. Ryo NAGAI
10. Jamie MACLAREN
11. Adrian ZAHRA
14. Steven MCGARRY
16. Sidnei SCIOLA MORAES
17. Chris HAROLD
19. Joshua RISDON
20. Daniel DE SILVA
21. Scott JAMIESON
23. Michael THWAITE
30. Devon SPENCE (GK)
(two to be omitted)

Ins: 19. Joshua RISDON, 23. Michael THWAITE,
Outs: Nil

Unavailable: 9. Shane SMELTZ (hip – 3 weeks), 13. Travis DODD (knee - ongoing), 18. Jack DUNCAN (quad - 1 week), 15. Isaka CERNAK (hip – 3 weeks), 22. Ndumba MAKECHE (knee – 1 week)

Wanderers v Wellington Phoenix

Sun Oct 20 Parramatta Stdm 5:00 PM

Wanderers Line Up

1. Ante COVIC (GK)
2. Shannon COLE
3. Adam D'APUZZO
4. Nikolai TOPOR-STANLEY
5. Michael BEAUCHAMP
6. Jerome POLENZ
7. Labinot HALITI
8. Mateo POLJAK
9. Tomi JURIC
10. Aaron MOOY
11. Brendon SANTALAB
12. Tahj MINNIECON
13. Matthew SPIRANOVIC
17. Youssouf HERSI
18. Iacopo LA ROCCA
19. Mark BRIDGE
20. Jerrad TYSON (GK)
21. Shinji ONO
22. Dean HEFFERNAN
23. Jason TRIFIRO
(four to be omitted)

Ins: 2. Shannon COLE, 12. Tahj MINNIECON, 13. Matthew SPIRANOVIC, 23. Jason TRIFIRO
Outs: Nil
Unavailable: 15. Yianni Perkatis (knee – 1 week), 16. Josh Barresi (leg – 1 week), 14. Kwabena Appiah (leg – 2 weeks)

Wanderers to open account

Saman Zaiei

With last seasons first placed against the last on the table, this fixture will undoubtedly be an entertaining one as Wellington Phoenix seek to do better than last season with only 7 wins and twice as many losses and suffering the biggest loss of the season against Sydney FC finishing 7-1.

In their first ever meeting Wellington beat the Wanderers 1-0 at home only to have suffered a 2-0 loss at the same venue in their following fixture.

In their third and final meeting, the Wanderers just scraped through with a not very convincing 2-1 defeat, which was enough to see them the all important three points which would see them take the premier plate and to set the new record of ten consecutive wins.

More recently in a friendly at Lily Homes stadium in Blacktown the Wanderers walked away with a 2-1 win over the Phoenix with both coaches taking a lot strategical and tactical points from the match.

How did they do in their last games?

Wellington looked promising in the first quarter of the game, particularly after the goal from Huysegems in the twenty second minute, but the second half was a different story with Berisha scoring in the forty seventh minute and a painful last minute or even last second goal from Franjic in stoppage time meant Pheonix start their season with a loss at home. The game in attack was fairly equal as Phoenix took 13 shots on target with Brisbane taking 14 and 7 each were on target, but it was clear that they were missing target man Jeremy Brockie who is on loan at Toronto FC.

With Labinot Haliti looking energetic as ever up front, team mates Mooy, Hersi and Bridge couldn't seem to find him at those crucial moments when he was doing everything he could to break down the Central Coast defence. No doubt the fans were impressed to see the difference from last season with Haliti and Juric in the striker role, but probably and very rightfully so would have been happier to see one or two more goals. As Western Sydney took 15 shots compared to the Mariners 7, the Wanderers are showing that they are not shy in front of gaols and as solid as their back four wa every little could have been done with Flores' amazing pas to find Duke who finished just perfectly chipping it over Covic.

Will the arrivals of Reira, Hernandez and Reece Caira make a significant impact on the Wanderers? Could Reece Caira, having transferred from the Wanderers, see his new team through to victory at his old home? Or will the midfield of the Wanderers create more opportunities for Juric and Haliti who will add the final touch to see them take all three points?

With the Wanderers lowest stadium attendance almost equaling the average of the Phoenix last season, this game is surely to be nothing less than 12000 fans cheering on the home side, looking for their first win of the season.

The Odds	Head-to-Head
Wanderers 1.53 Draw 4.00 Phoenix 6.00	Played 3 Wanderers 2 Phoenix 1 Draw 0

Referee: Jarred Gillett

Radio Broadcast: 5.00pm (AEDT) Live broadcast on ABC 702 Sydney, ABC Local Radio NSW, ABC 666 Canberra, Grandstand Digital Sydney & Canberra Online/Mobile phone app

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #WSWvWEL

Kiss of Death
Wanderers 3-1 Phoenix

Phoenix Line Up

1. Glen Moss (Gk)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Reece Caira
5. Michael Boxall
6. Josh Brindell-South
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Kenny Cunningham
10. Stein Huysegems
11. Jeremy Brockie
13. Albert Riera
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
21. Carlos Hernandez
22. Andrew Durante
25. Jason Hicks
30. Jacob Spoonley (Gk).
One To Be Omitted.

In: 1. Glen Moss (Returns From International Duty), Josh Brindell-South (Promoted), 7. Leo Bertos (Returns From International Duty), 11. Jeremy Brockie (Returns From International Duty), 22. Andrew Durante (Returns From International Duty).

Out: 4. Luke Adams (Omitted), 12. Tyler Boyd (Omitted), 24. Hamish Watson (Released From International Replacement Duties).

Unavailable: 14. Alex Rufer (Under-17 International Duty), 16. Louis Fenton (Shoulder Injury 1-2 Weeks), 20. Lewis Italiano (Gk, Ankle Injury 4-6 Weeks).

Short Passes

Newcastle Jets have re-signed Young Soccero Mitch Oxborrow until the end of the 2014/15 season, while local product Brandon Lundy has inked a two-year deal with his hometown Club commencing next season.

Sydney Women's FC will launch their bid to become the best club side in the world when they play their opening mobcast International Women's Club Championship (IWCC) match in Japan on November 30.

The Sky Blues qualified for the tournament by winning the 2012/13 Westfield W-League Championship and will face opposition from Asia, South America and Europe.

Who: Best Freestylers from Australia & New Zealand
What: Oceania Freestyle Football Championships
Where: Queensbridge Square, Melbourne
When: Sunday November 24 Noon til 2pm

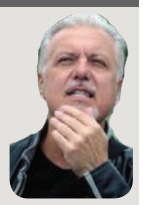
The Eastern Lions FC Senior Presentation night is on this Saturday at the Mulgrave Country Club from 7:15pm. Cost is $40 per head for a 2 course meal.

Round 2: ASK THE EXPERTS

THE VERDICT Adelaide Utd - 7 Victory 3 - Draw - 5 | Heart - 7 Mariners - 5 Draw - 3 | Brisbane - 11 Sydney FC - 1 Draw - 3 | Jets - 7 Glory - 3 Draw - 5 | Wanderers - 14 Phoenix - 0 Draw - 1

Santo Cilauro 00
Draw
Draw
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 0

Working Dog Productions

George Donikian 02
Adelaide
Heart
Draw
Draw
Wanderers
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 2

Media Mogul

George Calombaris 03
Adelaide
Heart
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 3

No.1 Victory ticket holder

Eddie Krncevic 04
Adelaide
Draw
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week:4

Former Socceroo

John Perin 01
Draw
Mariners
Draw
Draw
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 1

Hall of Fame Socceroo

Andy Harper 00
Draw
Heart
Roar
Perth
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 0

NSL Champ / Fox Sports

Ross Alatsas 02
Adelaide
Heart
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 2

GM Greek Media Group

Jimmy Campbell 02
Victory
Heart
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 2

Former Socceroo

George Campbell 03
Adelaide
Mariners
Roar
Glory
Wanderers
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 3

Sth Melb & NSL Legend

Jimmy Rooney 01
Victory
Mariners
Draw
Jets
Draw
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 1

World Cup '74 Socceroo

Roger Sleeman 01
Draw
Draw
Roar
Jets
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 1

Reigning Tipping Champ

John Doyle 01
Victory
Coast
Roar
Perth
Wests
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 1

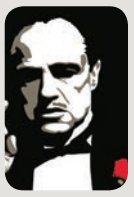
Original Captain Socceroo

Peter Katholos 02
Draw
Central Coast
Sydney FC
Draw
Wanderers
VPL: Northcote
Last week: 2

Former Socceroo

Steve Blair 04
Adelaide
Heart
Roar
Newcastle
Wanderers
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 4

Former Socceroo

Kiss Of Death 03
Adelaide
Heart
Roar
Draw
Wanderers
VPL: Bentleigh
Last week: 3

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NEWCASTLE UNITED JETS FC

Back Row (L-R): Adam Taggart, Craig Goodwin, Sam Gallaway, Connor Chapman, Jacob Pepper, Joey Gibbs, Andrew Hoole, Josh Brillante.
Middle Row (L-R): Mitch Cooper, Ben Kantarovski, Taylor Regan, Ben Kennedy, Mark Birighitti, John Solari, Josh Mitchell, Scott Neville, James Virgili.
Front Row (L-R): Michael Bridges, Emile Heskey, Ruben Zadkovich (Captain), Gary van Egmond (Coach), Kew Jaliens, Nathan Burns, James Brown, Zenon Caravella. Absent: Mitch Oxborrow

Northcote City To Face Greens In VPL Grand Final

Victorian Premier League

Brandon Galgano

A five star performance from Northcote city has seen the minor premiers advance into the 2013 Victorian Premier League grand final at the expense of South Melbourne.

VPL Preliminary Final

Northcote City 5-0 South Melbourne FC (JL Murphy Reserve)

Scorers:

Kalifatidis 5' Gavalas OG 31', Lujic 55', 78', Kounavelis 60'

Northcote City will play against Bentleigh Greens at AAMI Park next weekend in the 2013 Victorian Premier League grand final following their 5-0 drubbing of South Melbourne on Sunday.

On a wet and windy occasion out in Port Melbourne it was City who made the most of their chances in front of around 2000 people.

Things were looking positive early as a fantastic free kick from former South midfielder Marinos Gasparis found James Kalifatidis in the middle who prodded on home to make it 1-0 Northcote after just five minutes. The goal should've acted as a real wake up call for Hellas who up to this point hadn't conceded in their last two finals matches.

Things went from bad to worse on the half hour mark though as an audacious bicycle kick from Gasparis sent Gavalas back peddling towards his own goal and as he caught it he was bumped over the line by big man Milos Lujic with the referee Sean Evans signalling for a goal rather than a free kick for the South custodian. The decision sent South fans, players and supporters into a frenzy with tensions threatening to boil over.

The goal seemed to inspire the four time national champions who put City under fierce pressure late in the half. The best chance fell to Tyson Holmes who found an inch of space in the box and fired towards goal only for Northcote keeper Chris Petropoulos to fling himself full stretch to his right and get a strong hand to the ball to keep the score at 2-0.

The second half began much like how the first half had left off with South pressing high up the field forcing Northcote to sit deep and soak up the pressure. And just as it seemed that South might just get themselves back into the contest Northcote struck the killer blow as South pushed forward Northcote broke away with James Kalifatidis one on one with Gavalas who made a great initial save only for Lujic to follow up and strike home into an empty net to make it 3-0.

The goal took the sting out of the contest with Northcote breaking forward once again just five minutes later as a long ball from Petropoulos caught Kelly out of position with Kounavelis running onto the ball and slotting home past Gavalas to make it 4-0. Lujic then put the icing on the cake as he made it five with a powerful half volley from the edge of the box which left Gavalas with no chance making it 5-0 Northcote.

Northcote City's Milos Lujic celebrates one of his two-goal brace in the 5-0 Preliminary Final defeat of South Melbourne FC. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

The result ends South Melbourne's fantastic end of season form which has seen them go from potentially missing the finals all together to making their first Prelim since 2006.

For Northcote though they advance to their first ever VPL decider with both City and Bentleigh looking to win their maiden VPL title.

All attention will now turn towards AAMI Park this Saturday afternoon as both Northcote and Bentleigh will be desperate to secure their maiden VPL title. For Northcote it is their first ever VPL grand final appearance with the club having spent the majority of the last twenty years in the lower leagues of Victorian football. Bentleigh though will be hoping that 2013 will be their year as defeats in the 1996, 1997, 2001 and 2002 grand finals still haunt supporters who have yet to see their side win a title at the top level.

May the best side win.

By Brandon Galgano (@bgalgano94)

Road to the Grand Final

Bentleigh Greens: Won 4-2 v Melbourne Knights (qualifying final, September 29), Won 2-1 v Northcote City (major semi-final, October 5).

Northcote City: Lost 2-1 v Bentleigh Greens (major semi-final), Won 5-0 v South Melbourne (preliminary final, October 13).

VPL History Bentleigh Greens win: 1 Northcote City win: 5 Draw: 4

Last time they met: Northcote City 1-2 Bentleigh Greens

Form

Bentleigh Greens: LWWWW

Northcote City: WDWLW

The Grand Final Squads

BENTLEIGH GREENS

21. Stuart WEBSTER (GK)
2. Dominic D'ANGELO
14. Aron WILFORD
5. Jack WEBSTER
6. Thomas MATHEWS
8. Wayne WALLACE (C)
19. Liam McCORMICK
13. Dane MILOVANOVIC
35. David STIRTON
55. Ryan DE VRIES
20. Luke SHERBON
1. George MALLIARIS (GK)
11. Kristopher KIOUSSIS
17. Jamie DE ABREU
24. Luke PILKINGTON
77. Stephen HATZIKOSTAS

NORTHCOTE CITY

22. Chris PETROPOULOS (GK)
2. Adrian CHIAPPETTA (C)
4. Kristian KONSTANTINIDIS
18. Michael EAGER
12. Hayden D'AGOSTINO
6. Bonel OBRADOVIC
8. James KALIFATIDIS
10. Alex ROJAS
17. Marinos GASPARIS
20. Evan KOUNAVELIS
9. Milos LUJIC
1. Frazer SIDDALL (GK)
5. Nick TZOULIS
11. Dean PIEMONTE
14. Michael CATALANO
21. Harry KINIGOPOULOS

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Sth Melbourne and Sandringham set for WPL Grand Final Showdown

By Niki Cook

The 2013 Victorian Women's Premier League season reaches its climax on Sunday afternoon, when Minor Premier South Melbourne Women's takes on third placed Sandringham in the title deciding Grand Final at 3pm at David Barro Stadium, Bulleen.

The two sides have produced some memorable clashes over the last few years, with little to choose between them in each encounter, so the stage is set for a high quality hard fought tussle. The match is a repeat of the 2011 WPL Grand Final, which saw South come from behind to claim its inaugural Premiership at AAMI Park. Will history repeat itself? Or will Sandringham do the double by adding the WPL title to its State Knockout Cup success?

South Melbourne Women's has enjoyed the smoother path to the title decider, having had to play just one match since the end of the home and away season in order to make the Grand Final. Having finished seven points clear at the top of the ladder, the Minor Premier earned a passage straight into week 2 of the finals, at which stage it defeated Sandringham in the Major Semi Final and thus progressed straight to the Grand Final. It has played just once in the last three weeks, meaning that it comes into the final with fresh legs and rested bodies.

South has been the pacesetter in the league all year, remaining undefeated until the penultimate round and dropping just five points in the entire season. It has been as devastating in attack as it has been frugal in defence, scoring 105 goals and conceding just 11 in its 22 matches to finish seven points clear of its closest rival. After failing to back up its 2011 success in 2012, when it ended the year in sixth, South underwent an overhaul of its playing and coaching personnel, bringing in Bill Mihaloudis and a host of new on-field faces. The change has reaped dividends, with the team producing an attractive and energetic brand of football, which has led it to two finals and the Minor Premiership. With the 2013 WPL Gold Medalist and Golden Boot, Tiffany Eliadis, running riot through the midfield, and her Melbourne Victory teammates Laura Spiranovic and Cassie Dimovski leading the attacking and defensive lines, South has proved a handful for all comers.

Sandrinham players give the thumbs up after beating Heidelberg United in the Preliminary Final last weekend. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Sandringham's journey to the final has been more demanding, with it requiring three tough matches to earn a chance at the big prize. Finishing the season third, it started its finals campaign with a trip to Wembley Park to face the 2012 Premier, Box Hill United. 120 gruelling minutes later, it took a sudden death penalty shootout for Sandringham to overcome the resilient home side.

Defeated by South a week later in the Major Semi Final, it had to regather itself rapidly for a cut-throat Preliminary Final against a Heidelberg United side that was on a seven game unbeaten streak and came into the match brimful of confidence. A goal either side of half time proved enough for Sandringham, and it withstood a late Heidelberg fight back, to earn the right to face South once again.

In stark contrast to its opponent, Sandringham's success has been built on consistency and stability. It has maintained largely the same squad for a number of seasons, and the familiarity between the players is evident in the instinctive passing and quick ball movement that can make the team devastating. Coach Shaun Parton has also instilled in his charges a fierce work ethic and a fighting spirit, which ensures that the team battles for every minute of every match, making it a consistently dangerous opponent. While Sandringham can boast a current full Matilda in Stephanie Catley, it is frequently deprived of her talents due to national commitments, but the team boasts a plethora of quality in its ranks. Nicola Prins and Elaina Vatcky, pre-season and mid-season additions to the squad this year, have combined with the physical presence of Emma Runnalls to produce a lethal attacking triumvirate that provides a constant threat to defenders, while in the midfield the silky skills of Stephanie Tanti are ably supported by the industrious Sienna Fogarty and Hannah Stuart. Sandringham's defensive understanding could be described as instinctive at times, which should be no surprise given that it features two pairs of sisters, in the Kapustas and the Partons, who operate alongside a young (Emma) Gunn.

Lauren Farrugia, South Melbourne Women coach Bill Mihaloudis, Sandringham assistant coach Deb Nichols and Laura Spiranovic pose with the WPL trophy at Southbank. Picture: Mark Avellino

South Melbourne Women's and Sandringham have met four times already this season, with South narrowly shading the ledger so far with two wins to Sandringham's one. Sandringham's triumph, however, was a significant one, coming in the final of the State Knockout Cup in June. The match, which finished 1-0 to Sandringham was held, perhaps tellingly, on the same ground as Sunday's WPL Grand Final. While the first league clash between the teams finished in a draw, South has won the two most recent encounters somewhat convincingly, 3-1 in Round 22 and 4-1 in the Major Semi Final.

While the synthetic ground at David Barro Stadium could be said to somewhat favour Sandringham, given that they play their home games on a similar surface, and current form and a week off could give South a potential advantage, the reality is that in a Grand Final, form and history count for little and it all comes down to the day. One moment of individual brilliance, one error of judgement, one lucky bounce, one lapse of concentration, that could be the difference that decides the title. Will Sandringham claim its first ever WPL Premiership, or will it be denied by South Melbourne Women's, as it was in the 2011 decider? All will be revealed on Sunday at 3pm.

FFV WPL Grand Final

South Melbourne WFc v Sandringham
Sunday 20th October
KO 3pm
Veneto Club - David Barro Stadium

Boo's World

Mark Boric

Like a teenage qualifier coming up against Serena Williams, the Socceroos have been hit hard by a 6-0 6-0 scoreline. Holger Osieck paid the price with his job, and hopefully a few Socceroo careers will also come to a close before the dust settles.

With the blowtorch applied to the coach, the issue of who appointed him and who oversees the development of the talent pool he had to pick from remains ignored. With a youth team beaten 5-1 by Vietnam in a qualification game for the AFC Under 19's Championship, the quality of talent coming through appears questionable.

If you watched a dire Newcastle Jets put in an abject display against Sydney FC, do you question the negative influence that Gary van Egmond may have had in his time at the AIS? You won't see many Aussies on the EPL Highlights Show any more, so it's not just Holger Osieck who doesn't really rate our next generation.

What's Up Doc? Franz and Holger stand for the Merrie Melodies national anthem.

The Melbourne Derby was a grand occasion, but not a high quality game. The ability of, admittedly a true legend, Alessandro del Piero to dominate a game whilst moving at just above a walking pace (Jane Saville would have him covered) is a concern. Whilst the standard of the A-League is rising, it does not match the hype of it's media spruikers and we need to be wary about deluding ourselves.

The tide is starting to turn against the older Socceroos, not helped by stupid statements from skipper Lucas Neill. Only a few months ago many fans and commentators were apoplectic that Osieck would dare take off Timmy Cahill late in a vital World Cup Qualifier. Now he has been held to account for not injecting enough new blood into the side.

It's clear that there is a wider issue to our decline that can't be just put down to second-rate journeymen national coaches. Whilst the coaches remain in the spotlight with a largely sycophantic media failing to ask the hard questions. You won't see Craig Foster being critical of Paul Okon. It's not like he is Ange Postecoglu...

Was Osieck really appointed to secure a vote from Der Kaiser? Did the FFA schedule the games against Brazil and France knowing it would provide the results they needed to get rid of him? Are those writing up our new curriculum really up to the task? When you have more than sixty of the leading Victorian clubs taking the FFV to the Supreme Court, it that an indication that Victorian football going backwards isn't exactly helping the Socceroos?

Will the real issues be sidetracked by the big names in the football media bickering with their former team-mates? Impassioned post-game angry rants may inspire some, but we need more than a change of coach and pensioning off a few players to really turn things around.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A-League Title 2013/14

West Sydney Wanderers	4.50
Cnetral Coast Mariners	5.00
Melbourne Victory	6.00
Brisbane Roar	6.00
Sydney FC	7.50
Adelaide Utd	12.00
Perth Glory	15.00
Melbourne Heart	20.00
Newcastle Jets	26.00
Wellington Phoenix	36.00

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SETANTA SPORTS

SATURDAY 19TH OCTOBER
Bundesliga Round 9 Hoffenheim v Leverkusen 5:25am LIVE
Sky Bet Championship Round 12 Blackpool v Wigan 10:15pm LIVE on setantasportsplus.com
Scottish Premiership Round 10 Hibernian v Celtic 10:25pm LIVE

SUNDAY 20TH OCTOBER
Sky Bet Championship Round 12 Watford v Derby 12:55am LIVE
Scottish Premiership Round 10 Aberdeen v Dundee Utd 1:00am LIVE on setantasportsplus.com
Bundesliga Round 9 Bayern Munich v Mainz 12:00pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 9 Dortmund v Hannover 1:50pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 9 Hertha Berlin v Monchengladbach 3:40pm 1st Airing
Sky Bet Championship Round 12 Leeds v Birmingham 11:10pm LIVE

MONDAY 21ST OCTOBER
Bundesliga Round 9 Augsburg v Wolfsburg 2:15am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 9 Hamburg v Stuttgart 4:30am 1st Airing
Primera Division Round 11 Teams TBC 8:05am LIVE
Primera Division Round 12 Teams TBC 11:10am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 9 Highlights Show 7:00pm 1st Airing
Sky Bet Championship Round 12 Highlights Show 9:50pm 1st Airing

TUESDAY 22ND OCTOBER
Scottish Premiership Round 10 Highlights Show 7:30pm 1st Airing

WEDNESDAY 23RD OCTOBER
Copa Sudamericana Round 16 2nd Leg Sport Recife v Libertad 10:40am LIVE on setantasportsplus.com
Copa Sudamericana Round 16 2nd Leg Deportivo Pasto v Ponte Preta 10:40am LIVE on setantasportsplus.com

THURSDAY 24TH OCTOBER
Primera Division Round 13 Teams TBC 8:05am LIVE
Copa Sudamericana Round 16 2nd Leg Bahia v Atletico Nacional 8:30am LIVE on setantasportsplus.com
Copa Sudamericana Round 16 2nd Leg Universidad Catolica v Sao Paulo 10:40am LIVE

FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER
UEFA Europa League Group Stage Matchday 3 Sheriff v Tottenham 3:50am LIVE
UEFA Europa League Group Stage Matchday 3 Swansea v Kuban Krasnodar 5:55am LIVE
Primera Division Round 13 Teams TBC 8:00am LIVE
Copa Sudamericana Round 16 2nd Leg Itagui v Coritibia 12:00pm LIVE on setantasportsplus.com
UEFA Europa League Group Stage Matchday 3 Wigan v Rubin Kazan 1:30pm 1st Airing
Bundesliga Round 10 Preview Show 7:00pm 1st Airing
UEFA Europa League Group Stage Matchday 3 Highlights Show 7:30pm 1st Airing

SBS

SBS ONE
Friday October 18th
7:00 pm A-League Live – Round 2: Adelaide United v Melbourne Victory

Sunday October 20th
4:30 pm UEFA Champions League Magazine

Monday October 21st
4:30 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:00 pm The World Game

Thursday October 24th
8:30 pm Thursday FC
11:00 pm UEFA Champions League Magazine

SBS TWO
Every Monday
8:40 pm A-League Highlights Show

Every Tuesday
5:00 pm A-League Highlights Show

FOX SPORTS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

WEEK 9
October 12-15.
No matches scheduled due to international fixtures.

WEEK 10
Sat Oct 19 Newcastle v Liverpool
10.35 pm Fox 1

Sun Oct 20 Chelsea v Cardiff
12.50 am Fox 1

Sun Oct 20 Arsenal v Norwich
12.50 am Viewers Choice

Sun Oct 20 Manchester United v Southampton 12.50 am Viewers Choice

Sun Oct 20 Everton v Hull
12.50 am Viewers Choice

Sun Oct 20 Swansea v Sunderland
12.50 am Viewers Choice

Sun Oct 20 Stoke v West Brom
12.50 am Fox Sports News (TBC)

Sun Oct 20 West Ham v Manchester City
3.20 am Fox 1

Mon Oct 21 Aston Villa v Tottenham
1.50 am Fox 1

Tue Oct 22 Crystal Palace v Fulham
5.50 am Fox 1

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE - ALL GAMES FOX 1
Fri Oct 18 Adelaide v Victory 7.30 pm
Sat Oct 19 Heart v Mariners 5.30 pm
Sat Oct 19 Brisbane v Sydney 7.30 pm
Sun Oct 20 Newcastle v Perth 3.00 pm
Sun Oct 20 Wanderers v Phoenix 5pm

FOX SPORTS FC
Every Tuesday 8.30 pm

SPANISH LA LIGA
Sun Oct 20 Osasuna v Barcelona
4.55 am Fox 2
Sun Oct 20 Espanyol v Atletico Madrid
6.55 am Fox 2

TV Heaven

Matthew Naqvi

Round one of the A-League delivered a mixed bag of performances. Adelaide showed plenty of class beating Perth Glory and Sydney FC got the better of Newcastle Jets thanks to an impressive showing by Alessandro Del Piero. On the other hand, the Victoria derby was a tense but lacklustre affair with few shots at goal. But let's not dwell on the negatives; this week sees Victory against one of their arch rivals Adelaide in my game of the week.

Victory fans will be able to see their boys in action on SBS 2. Hopefully the Victory players have blown away some of the cobwebs and deliver an attacking game in away from home. Expect flair with Connor Pain and Archie Thompson causing trouble up front weaving past the Adelaide defenders.

Marquee signing Pablo Contreras' two game suspension should give Nicholas Ansell another opportunity to impress, joining former captain Adrian Leijer in central defence. Keep an eye on the new signings too, as they look to impress the possible Socceroos coach.

In other A-League games, Brisbane Roar takes on Sydney FC in what should be an interesting match-up. The interstate rivalry is always an enjoyable game to watch and this one will be no different. Sydney looked great last week in their opener and Brisbane got the job done against Wellington Phoenix. If Brisbane can pay close attention to Del Piero and limit his influence, then they may just take the points. This match will prove whether Sydney deserve to be genuine title contenders for this season.

The English Premier League has some exciting games too with Newcastle hosting Liverpool at St. James' Park. Liverpool is off to a flyer with sixteen points from seven games and sitting pretty in second spot, while Newcastle is ten points from the same number of games. Luis Suarez and Daniel Sturridge have started to gel as an attacking partnership and could have a field day against Newcastle. However Liverpool did fall to Southampton so you can't lock anything in.

The other match to keep an eye on will be Manchester United and Southampton. The Saints have impressed with a very solid start to the season, sitting comfortable in fourth spot and with a big win over Liverpool. United on the other hand have gotten off to their worst start in the EPL in decades and will look to right the ship against a team The Red Devils would have beaten convincing in any other year, this year could deliver a big surprise.

SBS 2's new football entertainment show Thursday FC had a successful debut with its mix of football, music and interviews and looks to grow in strength as the weeks go by. David Zrillic seems very comfortable in his role as the fun loving presenter; while Lucy Zelic delivers the serious news well. Comedian Matt Okine was a little lost at times but I'm sure he will find his place on the show soon enough and become an integral part of the team.

Don't forget The A-League Highlights Show is on Monday night for your fix f local action. And of The World Game does what it does best.

Katsa's Korner

George Katsamboukas

After a long injury lay-off, and due to unpopular demand, it's great to be back.

The Scorer received an Overseas SOS during the weekend and asked if his Passport was current.

Off he jetted to Sunny Paris where the wicket of the Holger Osieck was captured, with the Powerbrokers of Australian Soccer being not too pleased with the 6 that the Socceroo's copped from France, which followed a further 6 that they copped from Brazil a few weeks back.

The Jury is out as to who will replace Osieck, sentiment is going towards a local Coach, with the Protagonists (This is an Andy Harper Word) being Graham "Goal a Game" Arnie, Tony Popovic with Ange Postecoglou being declared the early favourite.

If Postecoglou is appointed, this will leave Melbourne Victory with a fresh challenge as to who will be the replacement Coach, a headache that I am sure that they do not need.

Gus Hiddink could also be an option if the FFA travels down the Overseas Coach path.

Appears that the Australian Senior International Team is not the only one struggling at the Minute, with the Under 19's losing 5-1 in a recent Asian Qualifier from non-fancied Vietnam, we await Coach Paul Okon's Interview with Craig Foster shortly.

Over to the Local scene we go where Northcote well and truly accounted for South Melbourne with a 5-0 Scoreline, in the VPL Preliminary Final on the weekend, to progress to the Grand Final against Bentleigh Greens at AAMI Stadium this Saturday.

Northcote's Milos Lujic heads home against South Melbourne.
Photo: ANITA MILAS

Northcote were deserved winners as they managed to convert most of their chances, however, the Man In Black took centre stage and could quite easily pop his hand up for Man of The Match Honours with his handling of the Second Goal, where South Keeper Gavalas clearly grabbed an overhead cross well outside the Goal Line, with Northcote's Milos Lujic bundling both Gavalas and the Ball over the Goal Line.

Taking nothing away from Northcotes excellent performance, the Game was turned on its head after this very controversial decision.

Many Punters believed that the choice of Venue for this Match was also very interesting, as Port Melbourne's Ground, which is an excellent Facility, does not have a large seated covered Grandstand, something that would have come in handy for this Match, given the large crowd in attendance, and also the heavy rainfall.

Saturday's Grand Final should be an absolute cracker, as both Bentleigh and Northcote play an entertaining and skillful Brand of Football.

Over to The A-League we go and Round 1 saw the local Melbourne Derby between Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart, with a very healthy crowd of 45,000 in attendance at Etihad Stadium.

The game itself though lacked excitement and imagination, a sentiment echoed by many who attended or viewed via Foxtel, however what surprised me was the number of Players who went down with cramp late in the Match.

After a 4 Month Pre Season and given that the game was not played at a fast pace, I was somewhat surprised how Players cramped up, one for the Sport Science Boys I guess.

This Week's Odd Spot

A whisper that I heard is that an un named Man In Black in a recent VPL Finals Game forgot both his Yellow and Red Tickets in the Dressing Room, and he realized this during the first half, and he made a mental note to himself to find them for the Second Half.

Unfortunately for him, he forgot to bring them out for the Second Half also.

And I was wandering why this Match was so free flowing!

Until next week
This is Katsa – Just as you have known him

Great Scott

Steven Scott

Last Saturday the Socceroos suffered their second straight humiliating loss, another 6-0 thumping, this time at the hands of France in an international friendly.

Any football fan who watched the match would have to agree, we were lucky to only concede six goals in the end. We were totally outplayed all over the pitch and barely put up a fight.

The terrible result was the Socceroos second 6-0 defeat in as many games. The two consecutive humiliating jobs could hardly be ignored, and weren't, with Holger Osieck having his contract with the Football Federation Australia terminated after the France loss.

After hearing the announcement it got me thinking, was the move to sack Osieck an overreaction to two losses in friendlies, or was the termination justified given his record whilst in charge of the Socceroos?

Looking back to the start of his coaching tenure, his first major tournament in charge was at the AFC Asian Cup in January 2011. He took the Socceroos all the way to the final, where they lost 1-0 to Japan in extra-time.

Later that year the Socceroos recorded what could only have been described as a surprise 2-1 victory over Germany in Monchengladbach. That victory for the Socceroos made them the only team that defeated Germany in all of 2011.

Another major success in the Osieck reign saw him take the Socceroos to their third successive World Cup qualification on June 18th, 2013, after the Socceroos recorded a dramatic 1-0 victory over Iraq.

During his reign as Socceroos manager, Osieck had a 52.27 per cent winning ratio, winning 23 of the 44 matches he was in charge of as manager. When compared to the previous two Socceroos managers who were in charge before him, this figure is lower than both. Guus Hiddink managed to achieve a winning ratio of 61.54 per cent in the 13 matches he was in charge of the Socceroos whilst Pim Verbeek recorded a 56.25 per cent winning ratio in the 32 match Socceroos matches he was in charge.

Now that Osieck has gone, the questions on everyone's lips are who will be chosen as Manager to take the Socceroos to the Rio for the World Cup in 2014? With a large cast of names being thrown around, will the appointment be a short term one, with the person chosen to be appointed to take the Socceroos to next year's World Cup? Or will a longer term view be taken when appointing the new Manager.

A the time of writing, the Sydney Herald online poll, of which 6,900 people had voted, had Guus Hiddink as favourite to get the job, with 37 per cent of the vote. Currently running second in the pool is current Melbourne Victory Manager, Ange Postecoglou, with 26 per cent of the vote.

The last Australian to manage the Socceroos was Frank Farina, whose reign as manager ended in 2005. Given there is plenty of managerial talent available in Australia at the moment, here's hoping Football Federation Australia appoint a local as the next Socceroos manager.

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Sydney United win inaugural NPL Trophy

By Walter Pless in Hobart

Sydney United 58 FC won the inaugural National Premier Leagues Final after beating South Hobart 2-0 on a bleak, wet and windy day at KGV Park in Glenorchy, Tasmania.

There were samples of all four seasons several times during the 90-minute match. The sun gave way to hail at half-time and, on a finer day, the attendance of 1,150 might have been improved considerably.

South Hobart gave a good account of themselves, but they ultimately paid for two early defensive lapses which put them 2-0 down after just a quarter of an hour. It could have been three, but the shot hit the post.

South Hobart had a 'goal' disallowed through off-side and they had substitute Ben Hamlett sent off 10 minutes from the end for violent conduct. They had a couple of dangerous crosses, too, but overall, Sydney United's greater composure on the ball, physical strength and speed made the difference.

Midfielder Glen Trifiro, who won the John Kosmina Medal for the man-of-the-match, put Sydney ahead in the 10th minute when he collected a short pass from Yuichi Yamayuchi on the left of the box. Lucas Hill and Hugh Ludford were unable to react in time and Trifiro sent a low shot past keeper Matthew Ferguson from 15 metres.

On the quarter-hour, a corner by Trifiro from the left was headed home by centre-back Ibrahim Haydar, who was unchallenged in the air, to make it 2-0.

A mis-timed back-pass by Hill in the 27th minute almost embarrassed South Hobart, but Ferguson scrambled back and cleared.

In the 35th minute, South Hobart's Jordan Templin's cross from the left was missed by everyone. The ball was knocked back from the right and Sydney's Nathan Sherlock was relieved to head it out for a fruitless corner.

Sydney United showed in the 38th minute that they could also counter-attack as Sherlock and Yamayuchu combined brilliantly down the right and the latter crossed low into the goalmouth. Luka Gavlas missed the ball completely and it carried beyond the far post to Mathew Bilic, who made an angle but fired against the post.

South Hobart shocked the visitors 2 minutes before the interval when a marvellous counter-attack down the left saw a long run by Cameron Williams, who delivered the ball to Templin. He crossed low into the box and Nick Morton swept the ball home, but the off-side flag was raised and the effort did not count.

There were a few half chances for Sydney in the second half, but they were unable to extend their lead as South Hobart dug in resolutely and refused to yield.

Morton was stretchered off in the 73rd minute after taking a tumble off the back of Haydar and Cameron Rogers came on as a replacement.

Hamlett came on for Chris Hunt in the 76th minute, but his participation lasted a mere 4 minutes before being sent off for violent conduct directed at the prostrate Benjamin Jurman. A melee broke out with most of the Sydney United players trying to get at Hamlett, but referee Chris Young eventually restored order.

Sydney United were never threatened in the closing minutes against 10 men and after the final whistle ran to the Grove Road end of the ground to salute their travelling supporters before collecting the trophy.

Sydney United's Ante Tomic is challenged by South Hobart's Chris Hunt. PHOTO: WALTER PLESS

South Hobart coach, Ken Morton, said:

"Very proud. I thought we were awesome today. I thought the football we played was quality. Just, unfortunately, out-muscled physically around the ground in key areas. They had the tall timber, they had the physical strength to outdo us and, obviously, they've got a bit of class as well in the team. But, I think they knew they were in a game.

"We didn't sit back. We were prepared to get on the ball and go forward. Really proud of the lads. Absolutely super effort."

Sydney United 58 FC coach, Mark Rudan, said:

"It was a good game. We didn't take too much away from South Hobart. I didn't think we were at our best, again. I think we're doing just enough to get through.

"It's never easy to travel. That's two weeks in a row that we've travelled now, to Brisbane and now to Hobart, but the players were always confident of getting the job done.

"They've got some good players in that team. They should be very proud of their achievement to make it all the way to the final. It's never easy and you've always got to respect your opposition if they make a final and we certainly did that.

"We didn't leave anything to chance and it was a good solid performance, and agin, nowhere near our best, but we've done enough. It's been a long season, a very long season, and I think deservedly so we've been able to become inaugural NPL champions and it's something that we'll cherish.

"I thought we could have been up 3-0 at half-time. At the end of the day, you can have all the possession you like. But, you hold the ball for a reason, to create chances and score goals.

"Apart from a couple of crosses, they tried to get the ball in wide areas and that's where they were dangerous, but we knew that and we had to work on that. We spoke at half-time about getting tighter in the wider areas.

"They kept the ball nicely, they kept it quite well, but we were happy to sit off them. There were times we pressed and times we sat off. We're always happy when the ball is in front of us and in their defensive to middle third. They're not going to cause us too much damage.

"Their movement was fine, but ultimately it comes down to putting the ball in the back of the net and scoring goals and I thought, in that regard, we could have scored more and created some better opportunities."

NPL Grand Final

South Hobart 0
Sydney United 58 FC 2 (G Trifiro, I Haydar 15)

HT: 0-2 Att: 1,150
Referee: C Young (NSW)

South Hobart: Ferguson - Scott, Ludford, Hill, Williams - Hickey, Ludlow, Morton (Rogers 73) - Templin, Hunt (Hamlett 76), Kanakaris (Subs not used: Fielding, Lewis, Wain, Pierce)

Sydney United 58 FC: Henderson - Sherlock, Haydar, Jurman, Tomic - Stamatellis, Speer - Yamayuchi (Mileski 65), Trifiro, Bilic (Barac 85) - Glavas (Pavlovic 77) [Subs not used: O'Connell, Herceg, Tomelic, Paric, Kofinas, Jennings]

Sydney United 58 FC celebrate their NPL Final win. PHOTO: WALTER PLESS

MELBOURNE HEART

DAVID WILLIAMS

MELBOURNE HEART FC

GOAL! WEEKLY

Photo: ROMEL AMERIKHAS

Vic Vipers FC take top spot as 'Vale falters

WOMENS REVIEW

Ashburton Women's Futsal Club 2 - 17 FC Richmond

ASH: K. Dixon, N. Lusi
RICH: S. Tanti 5, M. Rajcic 5, R. Alonzo 3, A. Erenli 2, K. White, K. Stensholt

After a positive start to the season with a win and a draw Ashburton were brought crashing down to earth at the hand of a merciless Richmond outfit with a point to prove.

MVP: Steph Tanti and MJ Rajcic (Richmond)

Melbourne University Futsal Club 3 - 2 Pascoe Vale Futsal Club

MU: M. Marques 2, L. Sammut
PV: S. Richardson, T. Ford

Top of the table clash was built up as a thriller and it didn't disappoint Melbourne Uni raced out to a 3-0 lead which Pascoe could not claw back only managing 2 to suffer their first defeat of the season while Melbourne Uni remain undefeated.

MVP: Niki Cook (Melbourne Uni)

Fitzroy Futsal Club 5 - 4 EFA Eagles Futsal Club

FTZ: D. Gudelj 2, S. Papadopoulos 2, Z. Stamatopoulos
EFA: S. Cope, M. Stockdale, H. Ryan, M. Burke

Two new look sides in the V-League Fitzroy grabbed their second win on the bounce in a tightly fought encounter which saw a first red card ever in the women's side of things to Zoe Stamatopoulos could not derail the tigers marching on to victory.

MVP: Stacey Papadopoulos (Fitzroy)

Heidelberg FC 2 - 7 Vic Vipers Futsal Club

HFC: A. Newman 2
VV: J. Pedic 3, J. Floros, T. De Melo, T. Benoit, K. Smith

Final clash of the night saw newly formed Heidelberg take on a strong looking Vipers outfit. Heidelberg stayed in it for periods but a second half hat trick from returning Jasmina Pedic was the difference in breaking the young Heidelberg backs.

MVP: Jasmina Pedic (Vic Vipers)

MEN'S REVIEW

Ashburton Futsal Club 8 - 7 Mickleham Futsal Club

ASH: R. Castro 2, D. Acovissi 2, R. Ferguson, G. McHeileh, R. Covarrubias, J. Berrios
MICK: I. Filipovic 3, E. Huynh 2, D. Kusturic, L. Holian

Two sides with a new look about them played out a 15 goal thriller which came down to the last kick of the game Ignat Filipovic cracking under the pressure putting his spot kick after the final whistle wide to gift Ashburton 3 points.

Man of the Match: Davide Acovissi (Ashburton)

Fitzroy vs Metropolitan - Mens - Fitzroy's American star in Jeremy Ortiz (17) celebrates scoring the match winner with Ben monteleone and Ale Granollers.

Ashburton vs Mickleham - Mens - Ashburton's Italian maestro Davide Acovissi celebrates one of his second half goals.

Vic Vipers Futsal Club 4 - 3 Pascoe Vale Futsal Club

VV: M. Avram, Jon. Barrientos, Jas. Barrientos, J. Da Silva (OG)
PV: J. Da Silva 2, S. Soufi

The next game on the card was an absolute blockbuster on paper as the 'El Clasico' as it's known, packed out the futsal Oz Stadium. Both Pascoe Vale and the Vic Vipers both undefeated, the stage was set for an epic encounter – even though Futsalroo Adam Cooper was absent for the Vipers.

The first half was – as expected – played in cautious circumstances as it ended 1-1 with Soufi scored for Pascoe Vale and an own goal from Joao Da Silva kept the Vipers in the contest. To open the second half action both sides traded goals with Maxi Avram and Da Silva scoring for the Vipers and Pascoe respectively. The next few minutes to follow were the most bizarre to witness in recent times as Pascoe keeper Lorenzo De Paris and the Vipers Miguel Barrigos were both sent off.

The Vipers were put in front thanks to a Johnny Barrientos penalty, but their slender lead didn't last as Da Silva got his second for the game to level at 3-3. In similar fashion in last Friday nights clash against Metropolitan, Jason Barrientos bobbed up for a late match winner with less than 30 seconds on the clock!

It really was an amazing clash, reminiscent of the Pascoe/Vipers clashes from seasons past with vocal crowds and two fit, firing and talented squads going head to head. As the Vipers go top of the table, their historic win over their fierce rivals opens up the 2013/14-title race. The Vipers of old are back in a big way!

Man of the Match: Maxi Avram (Vipers)

Melbourne Uni vs Pascoe Vale - Womens - In a tightly contested affair, the pressure form both sides was immense as Pascoe's Sarah Richardson is closed down by Letizia Sammut (L) and Priscilla Ribas.

Fitzroy Futsal Club 4 - 3 Metropolitan Futsal Club

FTZ: B. Monteleone, I. Altuntas, J. Ortiz, A. Granollers
MET: E. Simsek 2, T. Grgic

Both title favourites when the season began not much would separate these two sides. Todd Miles wielded the axe leaving Jack Zilles on the bench and Jimmy Brennan stepped up with a spectacular display-making match winning saves to guide his side past a very strong Metropolitan outfit who have now lost 2 straight.

Man of the Match: Jimmy Brennan (Fitzroy)

Hume Futsal Club 14 - 4 Albert Park Futsal Club

HME: V. Mazurskiy 7, N. Sahin 3, M. Vragovski, J. Michaelis, A. Alicevic, C. Cicekdag
AP: H. Bui 3, E. Mutabazi

Surprisingly Hume and Albert Park were winless after 3 games but Hume looked the goods early and often lead by returning superstar Vadim Mazurskiy who bagged 7 as Hume destroyed Albert Park who sit dead bottom of the V-League on 0 points.

Man of the Match: Vadim Mazurskiy (Hume)

Standings

NIKE V-LEAGUE Premiership

	P	W	L	B	D	F	A	FD	Pts
1 Vic Vipers FC	4	4	0	0	0	28	12	16	12
2 Pascoe Vale FC	4	3	1	0	0	28	12	16	9
3 Fitzroy FC	4	3	1	0	0	23	20	3	9
4 Ashburton FC	4	2	1	0	1	24	24	0	7
5 Metro FC	4	2	2	0	0	24	17	7	6
6 Hume FC	4	1	2	0	1	27	21	6	4
7 Mickleham FC	4	0	4	0	0	16	39	-23	0
8 Albert Park FC	4	0	4	0	0	11	36	-25	0

Pepsi Womens WV-LEAGUE

	P	W	L	B	D	F	A	FD	Pts
1 Melb Uni FC	3	3	0	0	0	21	4	17	9
2 Pascoe Vale FC	3	2	1	0	0	24	6	18	6
3 Fitzroy FC	3	2	1	0	0	7	17	-10	6
4 Vic Vipers FC	3	1	0	0	2	14	9	5	5
5 F.C Richmond	3	1	1	0	1	22	17	5	4
6 Ashburton FC	3	1	1	0	1	13	22	-9	4
7 Heidelberg FC	3	0	3	0	0	3	15	-12	0
8 EFA Eagles	3	0	3	0	0	8	22	-14	0

State League One

	P	W	L	B	D	F	A	FD	Pts
1 Brighton FC	5	4	1	0	0	28	13	15	12
2 Collingwood	5	4	1	0	0	26	12	14	12
3 FC Hawthorn	5	3	2	0	0	18	12	6	9
4 CF South Melb	5	3	2	0	0	19	14	5	9
5 FC Prahran	5	2	2	0	1	23	19	4	7
6 Coburg Ath	5	2	3	0	0	17	24	-7	6
7 Toorak FC	5	1	3	0	1	16	25	-9	4
8 FC Footscray	5	0	5	0	0	18	46	-28	0

State League Two

	P	W	L	B	D	F	A	FD	Pts
1 Doncaster FC	5	5	0	0	0	29	10	19	15
2 Mcleod FC	5	4	1	0	0	28	22	6	12
3 FC Preston	5	4	1	0	0	24	18	6	12
4 FC Geelong	5	2	3	0	0	38	21	17	6
5 FC Richmond	5	2	3	0	0	30	30	0	6
6 Elsternwick FC	5	2	3	0	0	16	16	0	6
7 EFA Eagles	5	1	4	0	0	19	28	-9	3
8 FC St Kilda	5	0	5	0	0	18	34	-16	0

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• Elite Leagues (boys & girls)
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• Elite training
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• Elite Futsal training
high level training includes goal keeper training

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Photos: ANITA MILAS

Cvitkovic's Gold Medal Knight

Gold Medal Winner: Mirijan Cvitkovic (Melb Knights)

MARIJAN Cvitkovic and Tiffany Eliadis were crowned the best-and-fairest players in the 2013 Victorian Premier League and Women's Premier League respectively in front of 400 people at the FFV Gold Medal Night at the Grand Hyatt on Monday night.

26-year-old attacking midfielder Cvitkovic had a stellar season for Melbourne Knights to win his first VPL Gold Medal with 19 votes, one vote clear of the ineligible Lambros Honos (Port Melbourne), four ahead of Michael Ferrante (Pascoe Vale) and five ahead of Milos Lujic (Northcote City) and Luke Sherbon (Bentleigh Greens).

18-year-old South Melbourne Women striker Tiffany Eliadis had a night to remember, winning the WPL Golden Boot and her maiden WPL Gold Medal in a close count, with her 25 votes edging out Alexandra Gummer (24, Casey Comets) and Gulcan Koca (23, Bundoora United).

FFV CEO Nick Monteleone

Coach of the Year: Goran Lozanovski (Northcote City)

WPL Gold Medal Winner: Tiffany Eliadis (Sth Melb WFC)

WPL Coach of the Year: Bobby McGuinness (FC Bulleen Lions)

The Winners

VPL Gold Medal
Marijan Cvitkovic (Melb Knights)
VPL Golden Boot
Milos Lujic (Northcote City)
U21 VPL Player of the Year
Alastair Bray (Bentleigh)
VPL Goalkeeper of the Year
Peter Gavalas (South Melb)
Bill Fleming Award (media's player of the year)
Luke Sherbon (Bentleigh)
VPL Coach of the Year
Goran Lozanovski (Northcote City)
WPL Gold Medal
Tiffany Eliadis (South Melb)
WPL Golden Boot
Tiffany Eliadis (South Melb)
WPL Goalkeeper of the Year
Christine Fonua (Altona City)
WPL Coach of the Year
Bob McGuinness (Bulleen Lions)
Referee of the Year
Lucien Laverdure
Development Referee of the Year - Jack Morgan
Best News Article - Zee Ko
Les Shorrock Best Football Image Award - Melinda Cimera

Hall of Fame Inductee: Alan Davidson

MC Michael Zappone

Hall of Fame Inductee: Janette Melvin

Argentina tops qualifying group despite loss

Latin Wrap

Francis Fields

Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Ecuador occupied the top four automatic qualifying places in the nine-nation group with Uruguay going into the playoff next month, despite catching Ecuador on 25 points but having an inferior goal difference.

Two-time champions Uruguay served up a thrilling 3-2 win over Argentina on Wednesday but must beat Jordan in next months' intercontinental playoff if they are to reach the World Cup finals. Uruguay were beaten to the punch by Chile and Ecuador, who claimed the final automatic South American qualifying berths behind regional group winners Argentina and second-placed Colombia.

Having lost their previous qualifier in Ecuador, compromising their hopes, Uruguay coach Oscar Tabárez highlighted a "dignified" end to their regional qualification campaign, indicating they must not take Jordan lightly, despite their rivals being ranked 73rd to their own seventh.

Cristian Rodríguez put Uruguay into an early lead only for Maxi Rodríguez to drill past Fernando Muslera in the Uruguayan goal three minutes later from an Augusto Fernández pass.

But the Montevideo crowd were on their feet again as their sky-blue shirted stars again went in front, courtesy of a Luis Suárez penalty -- after the Liverpool man had been bundled to the ground in the box -- his effort just eluded goalkeeper Sergio Romero.

Already assured of top spot, Argentina leveled again with Maxi Rodríguez bagging his second four minutes before the break with a fine run and shimmy past a pair of defenders.

The Uruguayans again rolled their sleeves up, however, and Edinson Cavani, dangerous all night, made it 3-2 six minutes after the restart.

Rodriguez almost completed his hattrick with a shot which whizzed just off target as Argentina, shorn of Gonzalo Higuaín, Sergio Agüero and Ángel Di María as well as Messi, suffered only their second loss of the series.

A 10-man Colombia put the icing on the cake of their World Cup qualification by beating eliminated Paraguay 2-1 on Wednesday morning courtesy of two goals by captain Mario Yepes. The Colombians who had secured qualification last Saturday at home in Barranquilla with a heroic come-from-behind 3-3 draw to Chile had midfielder Fredy Guarín sent off for his second bookable offence in the 31st minute. This however did not impede coach Pekerman and his players who still managed to win without goal scoring hero Radamel Falcao.

The battle of the River Plate went to Uruguay ensuring a play-off spot

A mistake by keeper David Ospina gave Paraguay an early lead when a Jorge Rojas shot slipped past him in the sixth minute. Captain Mario Yepes was then decisive in tilting the balance during the closing South American qualifier in Asunción's Defensores del Chaco stadium. Colombia qualified for their first World Cup since 1998.

Chile beat Ecuador 2-1 in their closing South American qualifier in Santiago on Wednesday as both went through automatically to the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil.

Chile forward Alexis Sánchez and midfielder Gary Medel scored in the first half for Chile with Felipe Caicedo pulling one back for the Ecuadoreans.

"This team deserve to be at the World Cup. We dedicate this to Chucho's memory," Ecuador coach Reinaldo Rueda said referring to striker Cristián Benítez, who died suddenly of heart failure in July.

Chile coach Jorge Sampaoli, who took over from sacked fellow Argentine Claudio Borghi midway through the qualifiers, said he had never imagined going to the World Cup.

The Mexican miracle

Mexico has qualified for every World Cup since 1982, with the exception of 1990 when they were banned by FIFA after fielding overage players in a youth tournament. Last Saturday, they needed a stunning goal from Raúl Jiménez five minutes from fulltime to beat Panama at home then on Wednesday needed the help of the U.S. to keep ahead of Panama.

Mexico fell behind early against Costa Rica when striker Brian Ruíz scored for the home team in the 26th minute.

Although Mexico equalised three minutes later through Oribe Peralta, whose shot hit the underside of the bar, Costa Rica went back in front when Alvaro Saborio headed what proved to be the match winner in the 64th minute.

Mexico's hopes of staying alive rested on the result of Panama's match with an under-strength US side, which had the luxury of resting some of their regular starters after already finishing top of the group standings. Panama, who have never qualified for the World Cup, led 1-0 at the break after Gabriel Torres found the back of the net in the 18th minute.

Michael Orozco brought the Americans back on level terms in the 64th minute but Panama regained control when Luis Tejada scored seven minutes before fulltime, tapping in a rebound.

The goal set off wild celebrations in the Rommel Fernandez Stadium but the cheers turned to disbelief when a header from Graham Zusi then a long range strike from Aron Johannsson in injury time ended their World Cup hopes.

Mexico now face Oceania winners New Zealand in a two-leg playoff in November in an effort to continue their long streak of World Cup appearances while Honduras will make their third appearance at the game's showpiece event.

Honduras qualified for the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil on Tuesday by clinching the last of the automatic qualifying spots in North and Central America and the Caribbean, while Mexico stayed in contention by claiming the playoff spot after Panama suffered a heartbreaking loss to the United States. Honduras needing only a point to qualify, made sure of their place by drawing 2-2 with Jamaica to join the U.S. and Costa Rica as the three automatic qualifiers from the CONCACAF region after a dramatic final round of matches.

Alexis Sánchez celebrating Chile's opener versus Ecuador ensuring qualification

WC Qualifiers

South America

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Argentina	16	9	5	2	35	15	+20	32
2 Colombia	16	9	3	4	27	13	+14	30
3 Chile	16	9	1	6	29	25	+4	28
4 Ecuador	16	7	4	5	20	16	+4	25
5 Uruguay*	16	7	4	5	25	25	+0	25
6 Venezuela	16	5	5	6	14	20	-6	20
7 Peru	16	4	3	9	17	26	-9	15
8 Bolivia	16	2	6	8	17	30	-13	12
9 Paraguay	16	3	3	10	17	31	-14	12

Results

Sat 12/10/13
Venezuela 1 - 1 Paraguay
Ecuador 1 - 0 Uruguay
Colombia 3 - 3 Chile
Argentina 3 - 1 Peru

Wed 16/10/13
Uruguay 3 - 2 Argentina
Paraguay 1 - 2 Colombia
Chile 2 - 1 Ecuador
Peru 1 - 1 Bolivia

North America

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 United States	10	7	1	2	15	8	+7	22
2 Costa Rica	10	5	3	2	13	7	+6	18
3 Honduras	10	4	3	3	13	12	+1	15
4 Mexico *	10	2	5	3	7	9	-2	11
5 Panama	10	1	5	4	10	14	-4	8
6 Jamaica	10	0	5	5	5	13	-8	5

Results

Sat 12/10/13
Honduras 1 - 0 Costa Rica
United States 2 - 0 Jamaica
Mexico 2 - 1 Panama

Wed 16/10/13
Jamaica 2 - 2 Honduras
Panama 2 - 3 United States
Costa Rica 2 - 1 Mexico

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Jol's time to expire at the Cottage

Samuel Collins

"We couldn't keep the ball. We were lucky. We don't look a fantastic team."

You'd be forgiven for thinking those quotes were from a bunch of disgruntled fans who had just had to witness another distinctively average ninety minutes of football. Instead, it was the, quite brutal, honest opinion of Martin Jol, who'd just seen his struggling Fulham side sneak past a dogged Stoke City team. It was a vital win, too, taking the West Londoners out of the bottom three. Though, Darren Bent's 83rd-minute strike - the on-loan forward calmly slotted past Asmir Begovic - can't disguise the growing pressure on Jol, who appears increasingly unlikely to remain at Craven Cottage beyond next summer, when the 57-year old's contract expires.

Martin Jol is walking a tight rope as Fulham manager.

When Mohammed Al-Fayed ended his 16-year affiliation with Fulham in July, selling the club to Pakistani-born American billionaire Shahid Khan, he left behind a side which has just begun its thirteenth successive Premier League campaign - a tremendous achievement for a team whose stadium still holds just over 25,000, a capacity which will soon rise to 30,000 following permission from local council. But 17th place, where Fulham currently lie in the table, isn't where the Cottagers expect to be, even at this early stage. Optimists will be keen to point out that Fulham made an identical start to the 2011/12 season, taking just 7 points from their first 7 fixtures, before finishing 9th, thanks to five wins in the last eight games. Though, a glance at the squad from two years ago provides fonder memories than that of the current one. Goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer, midfield stalwarts Danny Murphy and Moussa Dembéle and the versatile Clint Dempsey - who notched 23 goals in his final season before leaving for neighbours Spurs - were imperative clogs in the Fulham machine. Jol's predecessors perhaps had more luxurious rosters at their disposal; Roy Hodgson managed his impressive side to 9th in 2009 before a Europa League final in 2010. But it's not like the former Spurs and Ajax coach hasn't had time to develop his own squad.

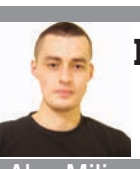
Almost 8.1m pounds was spent on new additions this summer. An experienced group of players were brought in: Maarten Stekelenburg, Scott Parker, Bent, Adel Taarabt, Fernando Amorebieta and Derek Boateng, as well as right-back Sascha Riether, who made his highly successful loan with the club permanent. They joined the likes of gifted forwards Dimitar Berbatov and Bryan Ruiz, exciting midfield talent Alexander Kačaniklic and towering captain Brede Hangeland. So why aren't Fulham firing? What's going wrong?

Some fans down by the Thames cite Jol's desperate - and, ultimately, failed - attempt to appoint René Meulensteen as his new assistant as a telling sign. Meulensteen, Sir Alex Ferguson's right-hand man at Manchester United for six glorious years, instead is set to join the Qatar Football Association as a technical director. Such a move is seen in some quarters as an admission of Jol's poor coaching and outdated training regimes, something which is possibly responsible for such miserable performances on the field. The statistics don't help Jol's case, either. No side in the English top-flight average fewer shots (8.3) per game than Fulham, whilst no other team concede more shots (19.7) at goal. Striking the balance is proving to be difficult. And the worrying stats don't end there. Star man and talismanic striker Berbatov has yet to score in over 500 minutes of league action this season (he was crucial in 2012-13, netting 15 goals in 33 league games), whilst keen observers of the clash versus the Potters two weeks ago will have noticed the average age of the Fulham XI was just short of 30-years old (29.7). Are Jol's side experienced, or just ageing? Their current predicament may suggest the latter.

And Fulham's immediate schedule doesn't make for joyful reading; after a London derby at Crystal Palace and a trip to high-flying Southampton, the Cottagers face an awkward-looking League Cup tie with Leicester City before games at home to Manchester United and away to Liverpool. It's set to be a tough three weeks, and with three of those next five away, it's important Jol improves Fulham's form away from Craven Cottage. The Dutchman has managed his team to just 9 victories from their 41 on the road in the Premier League during his reign.

"Relegation is a horrible thought, but it's 7 games," an adamant Khan told reporters this week, "there are still 31 to go. You can't jump to conclusions." Khan, who also owns NFL side Jacksonville Jaguars, insists he won't "act on impulse" but reports in the press indicate that defeats at Selhurst Park and St.Mary's this month will see Jol relieved of his duties.

Balkan Scene



Alex Milic

Bosnia-Herzegovina made history by qualifying for their first ever major tournament with a nervy 1:0 win in Kaunas over Lithuania securing its ticket to the World Cup in Brazil.

Stuttgart striker Vedad Ibisevic found the back of the net in the 68th minute to book the countries first ever finals with a fine display in qualifying. The National Team scored thirty goals and conceded just six in ten matches.

Since independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1992, the Bosnians have agonisingly all too often tripped up at the last qualifying hurdle, as they did against Portugal in the play-offs for South Africa 2010 and UEFA EURO 2012.

The win resulted in flares and fireworks lighting up the skies above the capital, Sarajevo, and a seemingly endless motorcade of fans donning national team shirts and flags blocked the streets after Bosnia capped off a fantastic campaign finishing top of European qualifying Group G, level on 25 points with Euro 2004 Champions Greece but ahead of them on goal difference.

"I congratulate these guys for their great work in the last four years, and it would have been real injustice if we had failed to win the group and qualify for the World Cup," said Safet Susic, manager of the Bosnian National Team.

Susic leads the celebrations

Manchester City striker Edin Dzeko said: "I wish to send my regards to Brazil and say that we will show how mighty Bosnia is."

After several narrow failures in the past, Bosnia seemed to be heading for another playoff as a packed Lithuanian defence, headed by inspired goalkeeper Giederius Arlauskas, frustrated the visitors.

Bosnia created pressure on Lithuania's goal from the outset, prompted by inviting crosses into the area from midfielders Senad Lulic and Zvjezdan Misimovic.

Playmaker Miralem Pjanic twice had Arlauskas at full stretch with venomous free kicks from 25 metres, while Dzeko skewed a shot wide from a tight angle.

Keeper Asmir Begovic was called into action when Kalonas Mindaugas tested him with a long-range effort midway through the first half before Ibisevic headed over the bar from a good position at the other end.

Bosnia missed another good chance to break the deadlock shortly after the break, when Arlauskas parried another Pjanic free kick and left back Ermin Bicakcic volleyed the rebound over from five metres.

Bosnia had the ball in the back of the net shortly after the hour but the goal was disallowed as Lulic was marginally offside after a teasing cross from the right.

Ibisevic held his head in anguish as Arlauskas turned his stinging low shot from 20 metres around the post, but he was not to be denied in the 68th minute.

Bicakcic broke down the left and delivered a perfect low cross that the striker side-footed into the net from five metres.

The breakthrough was greeted with jubilation in Sarajevo.

President Blatter presented Bosnia-Herzegovina's national football team captain Emir Spahic and head coach Safet Susic with the Golden Charter of Sports and Culture of Peace 'Juan Antonio Samaranch' on behalf of the International League of Humanists (ILH) during a ceremony held at Sarajevo's business centre UNITIC.

The FIFA President, himself an ILH member and honorary ambassador, granted the award "as recognition for the contribution made by the national team to the promotion of peace and tolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

"Throughout the past years we have seen how the national team of Bosnia-Herzegovina has become a symbol of reconciliation and union for the whole country, thus once again demonstrating the powerful role of football in society," said Blatter.

During his visit to Sarajevo, the FIFA President also took the opportunity to congratulate the President of the Football Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Elvedin Begic, on the excellent contribution of the national team.

Bosnia is the only country from the Balkans to automatically book their spot in the finals to be held next year in Brazil. Romania, Greece and Croatia have a chance to join them in Brazil through the play-offs while the biggest disappointment was Serbia which left it too late to make a charge for the finals under the leadership of the controversial figure of Sinisa Mihajlovic.

Serbia triumphed 5-1 in Jagodina to consign the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to a bottom-place finish in FIFA World Cup qualifying Group A.

The result seemed in little doubt from the moment Stefan Ristovski put through his own net with 16 minutes on the clock. Dušan Basta's goal and an Aleksandar Kolarov penalty added to the first-half advantage before Dušan Tadic and substitute Stefan Ščepovic provided a crescendo, albeit one that was tempered by a late Adis Jahovik consolation.

Udinese Calcio defender Basta headed in three minutes later. Without an away success in nine previous qualifiers, FYROM's first-half misery was compounded by Kolarov, who scored with precision from the spot.

Serbia refused to relent after half-time, Tadić sweeping beyond visiting keeper Tome Pacovski, who was beaten again by a sweet Šćepović strike after 73 minutes. Jahovik then emerged from the bench and ensured the Macedonians went home with at least something to cheer.

The win was just consolation for another poor campaign after the failure to qualify for the European Championships in 2013. The poor results and failures all began when Radomir Antic was sacked by the Serbian FA president Tomislav Karadzic after a 1:1 draw at home to Slovenia in 2010.

Bosnian fans celebrate

Bosnian joy

Barclays Premier League

Andrew Bishara

England Secure Trip To Brazil

For all the hoo-hay over the possibility of England spilling it, the Three Lions have all but secured their passage to next year's World Cup.

It all started with their 4-1 win over Montenegro, which eased fears that they might blow their chance.

Goals by Wayne Rooney, Daniel Sturridge, first time international Andros Townsend, coupled with an unfortunate own goal by Branko Boskovic, saw the English maintain first position in Group H.

Roy Hodgson, who was under a cloud of criticism for his lack of attacking ingenuity, denied that after so many draws only a win would have sufficed against Montenegro.

"I did use a lot of attacking options against Montenegro, but I might have done before had the players been available," said Hodgson.

"People can say what they want. What we try and do is work hard, prepare well and be organised when we get on to the field.

"Nine games without defeat and 29 goals scored is a good record, and Tuesday night will be a big day for me because if we do avoid defeat – and I hope we win."

Hogdson was right on that account: it all boiled down to what happened against Poland on Tuesday.

And boy did England deliver. A comfortable 2-0 win, has all about secured the English's passage to Brazil.

Wayne Rooney, once again, became the man of the moment, scoring the opener, and then it was down to Captain Steven Gerrard to secure the win.

The English were confident in their performance, playing a fluent game, knowing that a win would all but guaranteed their place in next year's competition.

Hodgson was pleased with his team's fluent attacking football, and has been quick to put England's prospects in context.

"If you want to win the lottery, buy a lottery ticket, and we have our ticket," he said.

"We've got a chance. I'm greatly satisfied. The only reason I'm cautious is I don't want to denigrate my other achievements.

The English were confident in their performance, playing a fluent game, knowing that a win would all but guaranteed their place in next year's competition.

"We'd played some sensational football in the first half, some of it quite spectacular. We dug in for a spell in the second half, which we did very well. We couldn't relax because, for a team with nothing to play for, Poland showed a lot of heart and fight.

"We came through and it's job done. It was appropriate that Steven scored the second goal because if anyone's played a captain's innings for the team, it's him. We're very happy and looking forward to going to Brazil, something the whole nation wanted."

Rooney, who has a stellar start to the season both for Manchester United and England, was proud of his country's performances.

"It's a good time for England," said Rooney.

"I think that was the first time I've headed the ball without that on. We fully deserved to win. We've always remained positive, we've had great focus and belief in ourselves.

"There's a great blend between the young players and the more experienced lads, like Steven and Frank [Lampard]. But, tonight, a big part was being patient."

Hodgson said that he will use England's upcoming friendlies against Germany and possibly Australia or Argentina, to test English youngsters.

Rule Britannia: Steven Gerard shows his delight as Brazil now beckons

ENGLAND EPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games (Most recent first)
1 Arsenal	7	5	1	1	14	8	+6	16	D W W W W
2 Liverpool	7	5	1	1	11	5	+6	16	W W L D W
3 Chelsea	7	4	2	1	10	4	+6	14	W D W L D
4 Southampton	7	4	2	1	7	2	+5	14	W W W D L
5 Manchester City	7	4	1	2	17	8	+9	13	W L W D W
6 Tottenham Hotspur	7	4	1	2	6	5	+1	13	L D W W L
7 Everton	7	3	3	1	10	9	+1	12	L W W W D
8 Hull City	7	3	2	2	6	7	-1	11	D W W D L
9 Manchester United	7	3	1	3	10	9	+1	10	W L L W L
10 Aston Villa	7	3	1	3	9	8	+1	10	D W W L L
11 Newcastle United	7	3	1	3	9	12	-3	10	W L L W W
12 West Bromwich ...	7	2	3	2	7	6	+1	9	D W W D L
13 West Ham United	7	2	2	3	7	5	+2	8	W L L D L
14 Cardiff City	7	2	2	3	7	9	-2	8	L W L D D
15 Swansea City	7	2	1	4	8	11	-3	7	L L W D W
16 Stoke City	7	2	1	4	4	7	-3	7	L L L D W
17 Fulham	7	2	1	4	5	9	-4	7	W L L D L
18 Norwich City	7	2	1	4	5	9	-4	7	L W L L W
19 Crystal Palace	7	1	0	6	5	13	-8	3	L L L L W
20 Sunderland	7	0	1	6	5	16	-11	1	L L L L L

Latest Results	Next Match
Manchester City 3 - 1 Everton	Newcastle U v Liverpool
Cardiff City 1 - 2 Newcastle U	Arsenal v Norwich City
Fulham 1 - 0 Stoke City	Chelsea v Cardiff City
Hull City 0 - 0 Aston Villa	Everton v Hull City
Liverpool 3 - 1 Crystal Palace	Man Utd v Southampton
Sunderland 1 - 2 Man Utd	Stoke City v WBA
Norwich City 1 - 3 Chelsea	Swansea City v Sunderland
Southampton 2 - 0 Swansea	West Ham v Manchester City
Tottenham 0 - 3 West Ham	Aston Villa v Tottenham
WBA 1 - 1 Arsenal	Crystal Palace v Fulham

One To Watch This Weekend...

West Ham pulled off a massive upset, crushing Tottenham 3-0. Can they repeat the dose against Manchester City? The Sky Blues are still adapting to Manuel Pelligrini's style, so this game is more open that people think.

EPL Preview.

The Premier League is back, and there are a host of cracking games there for fans to drool over.

First up, we have the tasty clash of Newcastle taking on Liverpool. The Magpies have an erratic season so far. Currently they sit 11th on the table, and while they have played some good football, their loose backline has seen them ship in 12 goals, costing them some valuable points.

Liverpool on the other hand, are cruising along, tied for first with Arsenal on 16 points; they will be looking to maintain their impressive early season form. With Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez on a roll at the moment, expect them to run ragged a weak Newcastle goals.

Speaking of Arsenal, they host Norwich at the Emirates. The Gunners' squad is thinly stretched at the moment, which makes their run all that more impressive.

(Sidenote: news has flooded through that Arsene Wenger will be offered a new contract. When questioned about the extension, the manager was in a confident mood.

"I can see the rest of my life in England, why not?" Wenger said. "I feel comfortable in this country because we share a common passion for football and as well I am very thankful for this country for having accepted me and giving me a chance. I am happy on the football pitch.")

Anyway, back to the game, the Canaries are in the relegation zone at the moment, but it is not because they deserve to be. With new key players – Leroy Fey, Ricky Van Wolfswinkel and Gary Hooper – settling into the team, it will take some time before Norwich click.

Third placed Chelsea will be looking to continue their hunt for the top-two when they host Cardiff City. Chelsea has been indifferent, since Jose Mourinho's return: flashy at times, dull during the rest.

The question remains, who will Mourinho pick in his attacking front three? It seems he's yet to decide his starting eleven, and while it's a joy to have the team he has (Edin Hazard, Juan Mata, Oscar, Willian, Andre Schurrle, Kevin De Bruyne), it becomes a problem when the team is not consistent enough to establish chemistry.

Cardiff City on the other hand, look nicely settled. The Bluebirds have started their Premier League campaign in great form. With eight points to their name, they've shown they have play pretty football and get results. Whether or not they can sustain it through 38 games will be answered as the year goes on.

Rounding out the top four, Southampton travels to the once-daunting castle known as Old Trafford. Mauricio Pochettino's side are oozing confidence on the pitch, with their backline being stellar enough to hold out (for the moment) any form of attack.

They will have their work cut out for them if the likes of Robin Van Persie and Wayne Rooney turn up the heat. Manchester United are not playing the exquisite form of football we expect them too. It's understandable though, as David Moyes will need time to settle in.

However, according to former United and Everton striker, Louis Saha, Moyes is fighting against the clock.

"I have no doubt that Moyes will be a success at Manchester United – but there is also no doubt he is fighting against time," said Saha.

"When you are in his position, it comes down to how long it will take to put his team together, find the right tactics and get the best out of them."

Follow Andrew on Twitter @_andrewbishara

London Eye

Robert Davis

The Season Of Change

Not even a quarter of the way into the Premier League season, Arsène Wenger is once again all things great about Arsenal, José Mourinho is no longer 'The Special One' and David Moyes' reign as Manchester United manager is already deemed a failure.

Welcome to the hopes, dreams and fears of the fans of the English game.

After major changes over the summer and apparent teething problems for a number of clubs and managers in the top tier, predictions for the next seven months have gone into overdrive and are more insistent and confident than ever before. Is there any substance to these supporters incoherent ramblings of immediate success and despair?

Every single team has already lost a game, with Everton lasting a mere six matches before an away defeat to Manchester City halted their unbeaten run. Only once in recent history has every team lost just six matches into a Premier League term, already highlighting that we may be in for a very different season. That and the small matter of Alex Ferguson not being in the United hot seat for the first time since time began.

For Arsenal, the only way seems to be up after Wenger finally answered the call of almost every Gunners fan and spent big. Not only did the now longest serving manager in England spend big, he spent wisely and brought in German international Mesut Özil from Real Madrid, much to the surprise and disgruntlement of Los Blancos players and supporters.

The performances of the former Emirates boo-boy Aaron Ramsey has also been somewhat of a revelation, after it appeared he wouldn't be able to handle the pressure of being in the engine room of the Arsenal side. He's added not only goals to his game but looks far more accomplished on the ball and has finally shaken of the heavy expectation on his shoulders. As well as the Welshman's impressive form, Santi Cazorla is still yet to return from injury to make a significant stamp on the season. The loss to Aston Villa on the opening day of the season seems a long distant memory.

As the red half of North London are seemingly overcoming a lull in success over recent years, so are the red half of Merseyside.

Liverpool are again becoming a team to fear thanks mostly to the remerging partnership of Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez. The 'SAS' duo have already provided 11 goals this season and don't look like slowing down any time soon, propelling Brendan Rodgers' side to second in the league, behind Arsenal on goal difference.

Summer signings have added some much needed depth to the Liverpool squad and the arrival of Chelsea's Victor Moses on loan as well as defender Mamadou Sakho from Paris Saint-Germain have provided more strength and steel to side that looked worryingly lightweight last season.

Despite the great starts of both Arsenal and Liverpool, it's the inconsistent early season form of the three favourites for the Premier League title that have highlighted the two teams who currently occupy the top of the table.

Both Manchester sides and Chelsea have had their fair share troubles early on, with United already trailing the leaders by six points.

An almost disastrous first transfer window for Moyes and fellow newcomer, chief executive Ed Woodward, have got many talking whether the Red Devils may take some time to return to the perch they occupied for so long. Off-key performances and losses to fierce rivals Liverpool and Manchester City have the Old Trafford faithful worried for the first time in a long while and are arguably the most unpredictable team of the top six due to their overhaul of management.

The indifferent signing of Marouane Fellaini has only added more pressure to Moyes, but one thing United do have is an abundance of excellent players. Robin Van Persie is backed up by the ever reliable and impressive Michael Carrick and the emergence of 18-year-old Adnan Januzaj has given Moyes' side an extra dimension. More importantly though, he looks to be getting the best out of Wayne Rooney.

Mourinho's return to Stamford Bridge has been somewhat anticlimatic and his almost inseparable love-in with the Chelsea supporters has even hit the rocks after the exclusion of the fans player of the year two years running, Juan Mata. Not only that, the former Inter Milan coach sent Romelu Lukaku out on loan to Everton for the season, leaving the Europa League Champions with three strikers who are yet to score a league goal between them.

Despite this, the Blues sit comfortably in third place, just two points behind Liverpool with the help of Brazilian playmaker Oscar, who has already provided four goals already this term. If there's one thing Mourinho knows more than any other, it's how to win.

Manuel Pellegrini's City side have gone about their business suspiciously quiet so far and the Chilean tactician seems to be taking a back seat within the media to Moyes and Mourinho.

Losses to Aston Villa and league new-boys Cardiff City sit alongside demolitions of their Manchester neighbours and Newcastle United. It's hard to tell which Pellegrini side will show up and their Jekyll and Hyde performances will need to be sorted out if they are to challenge for the title.

So why not let the Arsenal and Liverpool fans dream early on in the season? Whilst the Chelsea, United and City supporters of this world want the norm to continue, let us enjoy the unpredictability whilst it lasts.

The top of the Premier League table hasn't been this interesting for quite some time.

Better the devil you know. Much has changed since Mourinho was last in charge at Chelsea

Serie A

Luca Cetta

Record breaker Buffon and unbeaten Italy

Gianluigi Buffon became Italy's most-capped player when he took the field for the World Cup qualifier with Denmark last Friday. That draw, along with a stalemate with Armenia, helped Italy to an unbeaten record, but also proved costly.

It was in September 2004 when Italy last lost a World Cup qualifying match, a one-goal reverse against Slovenia.

Only one player from the side which helped retain that record on Friday was present in Celje, nine years ago. An ever-present member of the squad then, he remains so to this day. When captain Gianluigi Buffon stepped on to the Parken Stadium on Friday, he did so for the 137th time in Azzurri colours. It took him past Fabio Cannavaro in the all-time appearance list.

Still going strong 16 years after making his Azzurri debut, Buffon is eyeing a fifth World Cup in Brazil next year, and is dreaming of lifting the trophy once more. "It would be nice to win another World Cup. We do have the potential to do it, although clearly other nations have an even better chance," said the captain after qualification was assured last month.

Buffon gives the thumbs up from a safe pair of hands

Should Buffon get to Brazil next year he would join Mexican Antonio Carbajal and Lothar Matthaus of Germany as the only players to appear at five tournaments. Buffon – who made his debut in a World Cup play-off against Russia in 1997 as a 19-year-old – was a reserve in 1998, but first-choice for the next three tournaments. In 2002 he experienced the pain of Italy's golden goal exit to co-host South Korea. Four years later came the ultimate joy in Germany as Buffon lifted the trophy, while both he and Italy experienced disappointment in South Africa. 'San Gigi' lasted 45 minutes before injury struck, as Italy were eliminated from the group stage, winless.

Sitting on 137 caps, Buffon has two goals in mind – reach 150 and Russia 2018. Retiring at the age of 40 after that World Cup is his ambition. Doing so would ensure the first goal is conquered. He remains hungry for success. "Catching Cannavaro's record means a lot of time has passed, as I've been in the Nazionale for 16 years, or 20 if you count the youth levels. I always tried to raise our tricolore flag as high as possible and I still want to win something."

Although there are some fears 'Superman' can't fly quite as high nowadays. Franz Beckenbauer called Gigi a pensioner after his shaky performance for Juventus in last season's Champions League quarter final defeat to Bayern Munich. More recently, 1982 World Cup winner Fulvio Collovati critiqued his reaction time following the Denmark clash. "For some time I've been saying that Buffon is not as reactive as he was. That is not a criticism, but a statement of fact. Now he saves what he can, whereas before he performed miracles."

Italy grabbed the opener through Pablo Osvaldo, but succumbed to a pair Nicklas Bendtner headers. Buffon's former Juventus teammate twice outjumped Federico Balzaretti, with Collovati's call coming after Buffon was beaten at his near post for the second goal. Nonetheless, Alberto Aquilani's fortunate injury-time goal kept the unbeaten record alive.

On Tuesday, Buffon was rested with the Azzurri in Naples for their final qualifier against Armenia. The visitors had a slight chance of finishing second and reaching the playoffs. For Italy, the match was a look into the future. Lorenzo Insigne started just his fourth cap - in front of his home fans - while Alessandro Florenzi netted his debut Azzurri goal. Substitute Mario Balotelli was on the scoresheet too, but Italy were twice forced to come from behind to earn a point.

Aside from the unbeaten record, Prandelli's men still had to assure their top seeding at the World Cup. A win in either of the last two matches would have wrapped up a spot as one of the eight best qualifying nations. Instead, the successive draws opened the door for Switzerland, who claimed a top seed, as well as Colombia and Uruguay. When quizzed after the match, Prandelli said he was not worried either way. The South American pair won their last fixture after Italy's draw, meaning the Azzurri just missed out on a top seeding.

A positive for Italy was the return to action of Giuseppe Rossi. On 26 October 2011, he first suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury in his right knee, which was re-injured when on the comeback trail the following April. His last Azzurri match was three weeks prior to the initial injury. With 17 minutes remaining in Naples, the Fiorentina striker finally returned to the Azzurri fold. "It was a huge emotion to wear the Nazionale jersey again, be on the field with the lads and moving the ball around."

Looking ahead: Roma put winning streak on the line

Seven matches played in Serie A, seven Roma wins. The Giallorossi have surprised under new boss Rudi Garcia, opening the season with a perfect record. Given the summer changes and sales which looked to have weakened the team Garcia has done a fine job to date. Roma look invigorating going forward and unlike last term, have defensive balance.

This Friday they welcome Napoli to the Stadio Olimpico. Rafael Benitez' side are just two points adrift, a draw against lowly Sassuolo robbing them of a perfect start. Roma have already faced city rivals Lazio and earned a thrilling victory at Inter, but this represents their toughest test so far.

ITALY Serie A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games (Most recent first)
1 Roma	7	7	0	0	20	1	+19	21	W W W W W
2 Napoli	7	6	1	0	18	4	+14	19	W W D W W
3 Juventus	7	6	1	0	14	6	+8	19	W W W W D
4 Internazionale	7	4	2	1	16	6	+10	14	L D W W D
5 Hellas Verona	7	4	1	2	13	10	+3	13	W W D L W
6 Fiorentina	7	3	3	1	13	8	+5	12	D D L W D
7 Lazio	7	3	2	2	11	10	+1	11	D D W L W
8 Udinese	7	3	1	3	9	8	+1	10	W L W L D
9 Torino	7	2	3	2	10	10	+0	9	D L D W D
10 Parma	7	2	3	2	11	12	-1	9	W D W D L
11 Atalanta	7	3	0	4	9	10	-1	9	W W L L L
12 Milan	7	2	2	3	13	13	+0	8	L W D L D
13 Livorno	7	2	2	3	8	10	-2	8	L L D D W
14 Cagliari	7	1	4	2	8	11	-3	7	L D D D D
15 Genoa	7	1	2	4	6	11	-5	5	D L L D W
16 Catania	7	1	2	4	5	11	-6	5	D W L D L
17 Chievo	7	1	1	5	5	13	-8	4	L L L W L
18 Sampdoria	7	0	3	4	6	13	-7	3	D L L D L
19 Bologna	7	0	3	4	8	20	-12	3	L L D L D
20 Sassuolo	7	0	2	5	5	21	-16	2	L D D L L

Latest Results	Next Match
Chievo 0 - 1 Atalanta	Cagliari v Catania
Internazionale 0 - 3 Roma	Roma v Napoli
Parma 3 - 1 Sassuolo	Milan v Udinese
Bologna 1 - 4 Verona	Atalanta v Lazio
Catania 1 - 1 Genoa	Fiorentina v Juventus
Napoli 4 - 0 Livorno	Genoa v Chievo
Sampdoria 2 - 2 Torino	Hellas Verona v Parma
Udinese 2 - 0 Cagliari	Livorno v Sampdoria
Juventus 3 - 2 Milan	Sassuolo v Bologna
Lazio 0 - 0 Fiorentina	Torino v Internazionale

One To Watch This Weekend...

Fiorentina host hated rivals Juventus and will hope to close the gap to the leaders. The Viola are currently seven points behind Juve - nine from Roma - and do not want to lose further ground.

Viva Espana

Pepe Lopez

Spain Book Tickets To Brazil

Goals either side of halftime by Manchester City's Alvaro Negredo and Chelsea FC's Juan Mata secured a 2-0 win for the "La Roja" against East European visitors Georgia in Spain's final 2014 World Cup Qualifier. The win meant that Spain completed their qualifying campaign in a group that included European heavyweights, France, undefeated, and will travel to Brazil as the Europe's shortest priced nation to win the 2014 World Cup, closely followed by Germany and then Holland.

Despite the success, Spanish Coach Vicente Del Bosque lamented his team's performance in the post-match press conference;

"It is true that the match seemed a repeat of recent others we have had. The games with Finland, Georgia and Belarus have been kind of a copy. We can't deny we struggled and we couldn't score until the 15th minute in the second half but we can be satisfied. We carried on with our spirit after taking the lead. But the most important thing is we have taken a step forward in our aim of trying to qualify for the World Cup."

Spain are through to Brazil and can now prepare to defend their crwon

One of the biggest talking points in Spanish football is that fact that captain and Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas has fallen out of favour with his club Real Madrid, and is lacking match practise. Casillas' club selection problem has finally caught up with him at international level. Vicente Del Bosque had this to say about selected Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes ahead of Iker Casillas;

"I have already said we are going to try to act following logic and common sense. Casillas got injured against Galatasaray and he has played just one game in these last five weeks, so we believed it was convenient that Victor took the place. This is not significant, we don't say that in the future he is going to play or not but we keep the incentive for the others."

Just prior to Spain's match against Georgia, Vicente Del Bosque effectively extended his contract with Spanish Football Federation as the Spanish national team coach to 2016, effectively leading Spain's campaign for Euro 2016 in France. Spanish Football Federation General Secretary had this to say about the low key nature of the transaction;

"He will have renewed his contract before the World Cup. There is no hurry to make an official announcement. We'll make it before the World Cup. No date has been set for the announcement, but there is an understanding between the two parties. We have already spoken with Del Bosque and everything is pretty clear. We don't know exactly when he will sign, but we have several months to go."

An interesting development for the 2014 World Cup revolves around the current Spanish La Liga leading goal scorer and Atletico Madrid Striker, Diego Costa. Born in Brazil, but now a naturalised Spanish resident, Diego Costa has emerged as a robust target man who has a fine conversion rate in front of goal. Diego Costa has impressed both Spanish Coach Vicente Del Bosque and Brazilian Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. In fact, both football federations of Spain and Brazil have requested confirmation from FIFA on Diego Costa's international record, and FIFA have announced that Diego Costa has never played international football at any level. It would now appear as though Diego Costa will have discussions with both national team coaches to see who is more likely to offer playing time at the World Cup Finals in Brazil in 2014, before making his decision as to which nation he will play for.

Spain's world cup qualifier was hosted in the regional town of Albacete, at the Estadio Carlos Belmonte. Home ground of Spanish 3rd team Albacete Balompie. But more famous as the home town of Spanish star midfielder Andres Iniesta. Speaking after the match, Andres Iniesta was quoted as saying;

"It is an emotional night. It is really special to have achieved qualification here. It has been a wonderful few days and we put in a great performance tonight and can now celebrate reaching the finals."

SPAIN La Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games (Most recent first)
1 Barcelona	8	8	0	0	28	6	+22	24	W W W W W
2 Atlético Madrid	8	8	0	0	21	6	+15	24	W W W W W
3 Real Madrid	8	6	1	1	17	9	+8	19	W L W W D
4 Villarreal	8	5	2	1	15	7	+8	17	W L W D D
5 Getafe	8	4	1	3	12	11	+1	13	W W W L W
6 Athletic Club	8	4	1	3	13	13	+0	13	D L W L W
7 Valencia	8	4	1	3	11	11	+0	13	D W W W L
8 Espanyol	8	3	2	3	11	11	+0	11	L L L W W
9 Levante	8	2	4	2	8	14	-6	10	L W D D D
10 Málaga	8	2	3	3	11	7	+4	9	L D W D W
11 Sevilla	8	2	3	3	13	14	-1	9	W D W L L
12 Elche	8	2	3	3	8	11	-3	9	W W L L D
13 Real Betis	8	2	2	4	8	10	-2	8	L W L D W
14 Granada	8	2	2	4	5	8	-3	8	L W L D L
15 Real Sociedad	8	1	4	3	6	9	-3	7	L D L D D
16 Celta de Vigo	8	1	3	4	8	12	-4	6	L L L D L
17 Real Valladolid	8	1	3	4	7	13	-6	6	L D D L D
18 Osasuna	8	2	0	6	6	13	-7	6	W L L W L
19 Rayo Vallecano	8	2	0	6	6	21	-15	6	W L L L L
20 Almería	8	0	3	5	11	19	-8	3	L L L D L

Latest Results	Next Match
Villarreal 3 - 0 Granada	Real Madrid v Málaga
Málaga 0 - 1 Osasuna	Valencia v Real Sociedad
Elche 2 - 1 Espanyol	Osasuna v Barcelona
Vallecano 1 - 0 R Sociedad	Espanyol v Atlético Madrid
Levante 2 - 3 Real Madrid	Granada v Getafe
Barcelona 4 - 1 Real Valladolid	Almería v Vallecano
Atl Madrid 2 - 1 Celta Vigo	Real Betis v Elche
Sevilla 2 - 1 Almería	Real Valladolid v Sevilla
Getafe 3 - 1 Real Betis	Celta de Vigo v Levante
Athletic Club 1 - 1 Valencia	Athletic Club v Villarreal

One To Watch This Weekend...

La Liga is back this week and you can catch two games live on Fox Sports. Check out our Football Heaven TV Guide on page 18 for details.

CROATIA 1.HNL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Dinamo Zagreb	12	8	3	1	18	7	+11	27	W D W L W
2 Hajduk Split	12	7	3	2	19	7	+12	24	D D W W L
3 Rijeka	12	6	5	1	20	9	+11	23	L D W W D
4 Lokomotiva	12	7	2	3	22	13	+9	23	L W W D D
5 Istra 1961	12	5	2	5	15	17	-2	17	W W L L L
6 Split	12	4	4	4	13	13	+0	16	D L W D W
7 Zadar	12	3	3	6	10	18	-8	12	D D L W L
8 Slaven Koprivnica	12	2	3	7	13	18	-5	9	W D L L W
9 Hrvatski Drago…	12	1	4	7	8	16	-8	7	L D L W L
10 Osijek	12	2	1	9	8	28	-20	7	D L L L W

SCOTLAND SPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Celtic	8	7	1	0	19	7	+12	22	W W W W W
2 Inverness CT	9	6	1	2	15	8	+7	19	L W L W W
3 Motherwell	9	5	1	3	11	11	+0	16	L W D W W
4 Aberdeen	9	4	2	3	11	8	+3	14	L D W W D
5 Hibernian	9	4	2	3	8	8	+0	14	W L W W D
6 Dundee United	9	3	4	2	12	7	+5	13	W D D W L
7 St. Johnstone	9	3	3	3	12	9	+3	12	W D L L D
8 Partick Thistle	9	2	4	3	8	10	-2	10	L D D L W
9 Ross County	9	3	1	5	11	17	-6	10	W L W L D
10 St. Mirren	8	1	2	5	5	13	-8	5	W D L L L
11 Kilmarnock	9	0	3	6	8	16	-8	3	L L D L L
12 Heart of Midlo…	9	2	2	5	6	12	-6	-7	L D L L L

SERBIA Super Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Partizan	8	5	2	1	17	8	+9	17	D L W W W
2 Čukarički	8	5	2	1	9	3	+6	17	W L D W D
3 Vojvodina	8	4	4	0	9	5	+4	16	W D W W D
4 Radnički Niš	8	3	4	1	10	5	+5	13	D D D L W
5 Crvena Zvezda	8	4	1	3	14	10	+4	13	L W L D W
6 Jagodina	8	3	3	2	8	6	+2	12	D W D W D
7 Napredak	8	3	2	3	12	10	+2	11	D W L D W
8 Novi Pazar	8	3	2	3	10	8	+2	11	D L W L W
9 Voždovac	8	2	4	2	7	8	-1	10	D L W D D
10 OFK Beograd	8	3	1	4	7	10	-3	10	D W L W L
11 Spartak Subotica	8	3	1	4	7	14	-7	10	W L W L L
12 Javor Ivanjica	8	2	3	3	8	10	-2	9	D D L L W
13 Sloboda Užice	8	1	4	3	6	9	-3	7	D W D L L
14 Radnički Kragu…	8	2	1	5	7	14	-7	7	D L W L L
15 Donji Srem	8	1	3	4	8	12	-4	6	L W L D L
16 Rad Beograd	8	1	1	6	3	10	-7	4	L L D W L

GERMANY Bundesliga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Bayern München	8	6	2	0	15	3	+12	20	D W W W D
2 Borussia Dortmund	8	6	1	1	21	7	+14	19	L W D W W
3 Bayer Leverkusen	8	6	1	1	18	8	+10	19	D W W W L
4 Borussia M'gla…	8	4	1	3	19	13	+6	13	W D W L W
5 Hannover 96	8	4	1	3	11	11	+0	13	D L W L W
6 Hertha BSC	8	3	3	2	14	9	+5	12	D W D L L
7 Stuttgart	8	3	2	3	16	10	+6	11	D W D W W
8 Schalke 04	8	3	2	3	14	17	-3	11	W D L W W
9 Werder Bremen	8	3	2	3	9	12	-3	11	D D W L L
10 Hoffenheim	8	2	4	2	20	20	+0	10	D D L W L
11 Mainz 05	8	3	1	4	12	17	-5	10	D L L L L
12 Augsburg	8	3	1	4	9	15	-6	10	L D L W W
13 Eintracht Fran…	8	2	3	3	11	13	-2	9	D D D W L
14 Wolfsburg	8	3	0	5	9	11	-2	9	L L W L W
15 Hamburger SV	8	2	2	4	17	19	-2	8	W D L L W
16 Nürnberg	8	0	5	3	9	17	-8	5	L D D D L
17 Freiburg	8	0	4	4	9	18	-9	4	D L D L D
18 Eintracht Brau…	8	1	1	6	5	18	-13	4	W L L D L

HOLLAND Eredivisie

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Twente	9	5	3	1	22	5	+17	18	W W W D D
2 PSV	9	5	3	1	21	8	+13	18	W L W D D
3 Ajax	9	5	2	2	22	13	+9	17	W W L W D
4 Feyenoord	9	5	1	3	20	15	+5	16	W W W D W
5 Heerenveen	8	4	3	1	21	16	+5	15	W D W D D
6 PEC Zwolle	9	4	3	2	14	9	+5	15	D D L L D
7 Vitesse	9	4	2	3	16	13	+3	14	L L W W D
8 Groningen	9	4	2	3	19	20	-1	14	W L W L D
9 AZ	9	4	1	4	14	16	-2	13	L W L W D
10 NAC Breda	9	3	3	3	13	10	+3	12	W D W W D
11 Go Ahead Eagles	9	3	3	3	14	21	-7	12	W L D L W
12 Heracles	9	3	1	5	13	17	-4	10	L W L L W
13 Roda JC	9	2	4	3	14	19	-5	10	D D D L L
14 Cambuur	9	2	3	4	7	8	-1	9	L L D W D
15 Utrecht	9	2	3	4	9	18	-9	9	L D L W D
16 ADO Den Haag	8	2	1	5	10	17	-7	7	W L D L L
17 RKC Waalwijk	9	1	2	6	12	22	-10	5	L L L L L
18 NEC	9	0	4	5	14	28	-14	4	L L D D D

TURKEY Süper Lig

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Fenerbahçe	7	5	1	1	16	7	+9	16	D W W W W
2 Beşiktaş	6	5	0	1	12	4	+8	15	W L W W W
3 Akhisar Beledi…	7	4	1	2	10	6	+4	13	W D W L W
4 Trabzonspor	7	4	1	2	6	6	+0	13	D W W W L
5 Rizespor	7	4	1	2	13	9	+4	13	L D W W W
6 Sivasspor	7	4	0	3	14	12	+2	12	W W L W L
7 Kasımpaşa	7	4	0	3	13	10	+3	12	W L W L W
8 Eskişehirspor	7	3	1	3	8	6	+2	10	L W W L D
9 Antalyaspor	7	2	3	2	7	6	+1	9	W W L D L
10 Konyaspor	7	3	0	4	6	10	-4	9	W L W L L
11 Bursaspor	7	2	2	3	5	9	-4	8	W D L L W
12 Karabükspor	7	2	2	3	5	7	-2	8	L L D L W
13 Galatasaray	6	1	4	1	6	6	+0	7	L D D D D
14 Elazığspor	7	2	1	4	10	18	-8	7	L L L W W
15 Gaziantepspor	7	2	1	4	7	11	-4	7	W W L L L
16 Kayseri Erciye…	7	1	3	3	5	8	-3	6	L D D W L
17 Kayserispor	7	1	2	4	5	10	-5	5	L D L D L

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Burnley	11	8	2	1	21	7	+14	26	W W W W W
2 Queens Park Ra…	10	8	2	0	12	2	+10	26	W W W D W
3 Leicester City	11	7	2	2	17	11	+6	23	L W W D W
4 Nottingham Forest	11	6	4	1	19	11	+8	22	W D W D D
5 Watford	11	6	3	2	22	11	+11	21	W L W W W
6 Blackpool	11	5	5	1	13	9	+4	20	D D D D L
7 Reading	11	5	4	2	15	10	+5	19	L D W W W
8 AFC Bournemouth	11	5	1	5	18	24	-6	16	W L L D W
9 Blackburn Rovers	11	4	3	4	17	13	+4	15	L W W D L
10 Derby County	11	4	3	4	21	18	+3	15	W D L L D
11 Ipswich Town	11	4	3	4	18	15	+3	15	D D W L W
12 Wigan Athletic	9	4	2	3	14	10	+4	14	W L W L W
13 Huddersfield Town	11	3	5	3	13	10	+3	14	L D D D W
14 Leeds United	11	4	2	5	10	13	-3	14	L W L L L
15 Brighton & Hov…	11	3	4	4	11	12	-1	13	L D L W D
16 Middlesbrough	11	2	6	3	17	18	-1	12	W D L D D
17 Doncaster Rovers	10	3	3	4	10	12	-2	12	W L W D L
18 Millwall	11	3	2	6	12	23	-11	11	L L W W W
19 Birmingham City	11	3	1	7	13	15	-2	10	L W L W L
20 Bolton Wanderers	11	1	5	5	9	18	-9	8	W D D L D
21 Charlton Athletic	10	1	4	5	8	14	-6	7	D D L L L
22 Sheffield Wedn…	10	0	6	4	10	16	-6	6	D D L L D
23 Yeovil Town	11	1	2	8	6	18	-12	5	L L D L L
24 Barnsley	11	1	2	8	11	27	-16	5	L D L L L

LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Leyton Orient	11	9	2	0	27	8	+19	29	W D D W W
2 Peterborough U…	11	9	1	1	23	8	+15	28	W W W W W
3 Wolverhampton …	10	8	1	1	20	6	+14	25	W W W L W
4 Bradford City	11	6	3	2	21	9	+12	21	L W W W D
5 Preston North End	11	5	4	2	17	12	+5	19	L L W W W
6 Rotherham United	11	5	4	2	16	15	+1	19	L W L D W
7 Swindon Town	11	5	2	4	20	13	+7	17	W W L W L
8 Milton Keynes Dons	11	4	4	3	18	14	+4	16	L L W L W
9 Crawley Town	10	4	4	2	17	14	+3	16	D W D D W
10 Walsall	11	4	4	3	12	11	+1	16	D L D D W
11 Brentford	11	4	3	4	13	15	-2	15	L L W L W
12 Port Vale	11	4	2	5	13	16	-3	14	L D W W L
13 Shrewsbury Town	11	2	6	3	12	13	-1	12	W D L L D
14 Colchester United	11	2	6	3	10	14	-4	12	D L D D D
15 Carlisle United	10	3	3	4	10	19	-9	12	D W W W L
16 Coventry City	11	6	2	3	26	20	+6	10	W W L L W
17 Gillingham	11	2	3	6	13	19	-6	9	L W W L L
18 Crewe Alexandra	11	2	3	6	10	25	-15	9	W L L D L
19 Oldham Athletic	10	2	2	6	13	16	-3	8	D L D L L
20 Stevenage	11	2	2	7	9	19	-10	8	W L L L L
21 Tranmere Rovers	11	2	2	7	10	21	-11	8	W L L L L
22 Notts County	10	2	1	7	13	19	-6	7	W L W L L
23 Bristol City	10	0	6	4	15	21	-6	6	D D L D L

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Chesterfield	11	7	2	2	18	9	+9	23	D L L W W
2 Fleetwood Town	11	7	1	3	20	12	+8	22	D W L W W
3 Oxford United	11	6	3	2	21	12	+9	21	W L W L D
4 Morecambe	11	6	3	2	19	14	+5	21	W W D D W
5 Rochdale	11	6	2	3	16	11	+5	20	W L W W W
6 Exeter City	11	6	2	3	14	13	+1	20	L W W L W
7 Mansfield Town	11	5	4	2	15	11	+4	19	D L W W W
8 Scunthorpe United	10	4	5	1	13	8	+5	17	W D W W D
9 Wycombe Wanderer	11	5	2	4	17	14	+3	17	W L L D W
10 Southend United	11	5	2	4	12	10	+2	17	W W D D L
11 AFC Wimbledon	11	5	2	4	13	12	+1	17	D L L W L
12 Newport County	11	4	4	3	15	14	+1	16	L D W W L
13 Dagenham & Red	11	4	4	3	15	15	+0	16	L W W D W
14 Burton Albion	11	4	3	4	15	17	-2	15	L W D L L
15 Portsmouth	11	3	4	4	18	19	-1	13	D W L L W
16 Hartlepool United	11	3	3	5	13	14	-1	12	W W L D W
17 Cheltenham Town	11	3	3	5	14	22	-8	12	W L W L D
18 York City	10	3	2	5	13	14	-1	11	W W D L L
19 Plymouth Argyle	11	3	2	6	8	14	-6	11	D L D L L
20 Bristol Rovers	11	2	4	5	10	15	-5	10	D L D D L
21 Bury	11	2	3	6	13	15	-2	9	L D L D L
22 Torquay United	11	2	3	6	13	21	-8	9	L L L W L
23 Northampton Town	11	2	2	7	8	15	-7	8	L W D L L
24 Accrington Stanley	11	0	3	8	7	19	-12	3	D L D L L

Greece Super League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	7	6	1	0	20	1	+19	19	W W D W W
2 PAOK	7	5	1	1	13	6	+7	16	W D W W W
3 Ergotelis	7	3	4	0	9	4	+5	13	W W D D D
4 Atromitos	7	3	2	2	10	7	+3	11	D W W L W
5 Panathinaikos	7	3	2	2	8	8	+0	11	L W W D D
6 Asteras Tripolis	7	2	4	1	12	9	+3	10	D L W D W
7 PAS Giannina	7	3	1	3	8	8	+0	10	L W L W L
8 Xanthi	7	3	1	3	7	11	-4	10	W L W L D
9 Panthrakikos	7	2	4	1	8	7	+1	10	D D W D W
10 Kalloni	7	3	0	4	6	6	+0	9	L L L W W
11 Panaitolikos	7	2	3	2	5	4	+1	9	W D D D L
12 Levadiakos	7	2	2	3	7	14	-7	8	W L W D L
13 Panionios	7	1	3	3	7	10	-3	6	L L D D L
14 Apollon Smirnis	7	2	0	5	9	15	-6	6	L W L L L
15 Veria	7	1	2	4	6	13	-7	5	L L L L D
16 Platanias	7	0	5	2	6	9	-3	5	L D L D D
17 OFI	7	0	5	2	3	6	-3	5	D D L D D
18 Aris	7	1	2	4	4	10	-6	5	W D L D L

France Ligue 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Monaco	9	6	3	0	16	5	+11	21	W D W D W
2 PSG	9	6	3	0	14	5	+9	21	W W W D W
3 Lille	9	5	2	2	11	4	+7	17	W D W W L
4 Olympique Mars…	9	5	2	2	13	7	+6	17	L W W D D
5 Nantes	9	5	1	3	14	8	+6	16	W W W L W
6 Nice	9	4	2	3	11	10	+1	14	L W L W W
7 Saint-Étienne	9	4	1	4	12	11	+1	13	L D L L W
8 Montpellier	9	2	6	1	14	12	+2	12	W D D D D
9 Reims	9	2	6	1	7	6	+1	12	D D D D D
10 Bastia	9	3	3	3	11	11	+0	12	W D L D D
11 Rennes	9	3	3	3	8	9	-1	12	L L D W D
12 Toulouse	9	3	3	3	7	10	-3	12	W L W W D
13 Guingamp	9	3	2	4	12	10	+2	11	W L W D D
14 Olym Lyonnais	9	3	2	4	13	12	+1	11	L D L W D
15 Bordeaux	9	2	4	3	11	12	-1	10	W D D D L
16 Evian TG	9	2	3	4	10	17	-7	9	L D L D W
17 Ajaccio	9	1	4	4	6	12	-6	7	L D W L L
18 Lorient	9	2	1	6	7	15	-8	7	L L L D L
19 Sochaux	9	1	2	6	7	18	-11	5	L W L L L
20 Valenciennes	9	1	1	7	5	15	-10	4	D L L L L

Portugal Premeira Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Benfica	24	20	4	0	66	15	+51	64	W W W W W
2 Porto	24	18	6	0	55	11	+44	60	W D W D W
3 Paços de Ferreira	24	12	9	3	35	22	+13	45	W W D W L
4 Sporting Braga	24	13	4	7	52	34	+18	43	L W W W W
5 Marítimo	24	8	9	7	28	36	-8	33	W D L D W
6 Estoril	24	9	5	10	35	32	+3	32	D W L W W
7 Nacional	24	8	7	9	36	39	-3	31	W D D W W
8 Sporting CP	24	7	9	8	26	29	-3	30	W W D D L
9 Rio Ave	24	8	6	10	27	36	-9	30	L L D L L
10 Vitória Guimarães	24	8	6	10	27	40	-13	30	L L W W L
11 Vitória Setúbal	24	6	5	13	27	47	-20	23	L L L L W
12 Académica	24	4	9	11	28	39	-11	21	L L D L L
13 Olhanense	24	4	9	11	24	35	-11	21	W L D L L
14 Moreirense	24	4	9	11	23	37	-14	21	D W D D D
15 Gil Vicente	24	4	7	13	24	44	-20	19	L L L L D
16 Beira-Mar	24	3	8	13	26	43	-17	17	L D D L L

One Game At A Time

France
Nice v Olympique Mars…
Reims v Toulouse
PSG v Bastia
Ajaccio V Nantes
Evian TG v Guingamp
Montpellier v Lille
Rennes v Valenciennes
Sochaux v Monaco
Saint-Étienne v Lorient
Olympique Lyonnais v Bordeaux

Germany
Hoffenheim v Bayer Leverkusen
Borussia Dortmund v Hannover 96
Bayern München v Mainz 05
Werder Bremen v Freiburg
Eintracht Brau… v Schalke 04
Eintracht Fran… v Nürnberg
Hertha BSC v Borussia M'gla…
Hamburger SV v Stuttgart
Augsburg v Wolfsburg

Croatia
Rijeka v Zadar
Lokomotiva v Istra 1961
Split v Dinamo Zagreb
Slaven Koprivnica v Osijek
Hrvatski Drago… v Hajduk Split

Serbia
OFK Beograd v Radnički Kragu…
Vojvodina v Sloboda Užice
Javor Ivanjica v Rad Beograd
Jagodina v Partizan
Napredak v Radnički Niš
Crvena Zvezda v Novi Pazar
Donji Srem v Čukarički
Voždovac v Spartak Subotica

English Championship
Blackpool v Wigan Athletic
Reading v Doncaster Rovers
Nottingham Forest v AFC Bournemouth
Bolton Wanderers v Sheffield Wedn…
Watford v Derby County
Blackburn Rovers v Charlton Athletic
Barnsley v Middlesbrough
Leicester City v Huddersfield Town
Yeovil Town v Brighton & Hov…
Ipswich Town v Burnley
Millwall v Queens Park Ra…
Leeds United v Birmingham City

English League One
Swindon Town v Notts County
Crawley Town v Bradford City
Wolverhampton …v Coventry City
Gillingham v Preston North End
Milton Keynes Dons v Rotherham United
Walsall v Stevenage
Tranmere Rovers v Leyton Orient
Oldham Athletic v Carlisle United
Brentford v Colchester United
Peterborough U… v Shrewsbury Town
Crewe Alexandra v Bristol City
Sheffield United v Port Vale

English League Two
Southend United v Fleetwood Town
Chesterfield v Burton Albion
Northampton Town v Dagenham & Red…
Accrington Stanley v Oxford United
Morecambe v AFC Wimbledon
Torquay United v Mansfield Town
Bristol Rovers v Wycombe Wanderers
Portsmouth v Bury
Newport County v York City fo
Hartlepool United v Plymouth Argyle
Cheltenham Town v Rochdale
Scunthorpe United v Exeter City

Scotland
Hibernian v Celtic
Aberdeen v Dundee United
Kilmarnock v Ross County
Motherwell v Heart of Midlo…
St. Mirren v St. Johnstone
Inverness CT v Partick Thistle

Greece
Atromitos v Levadiakos
PAOK v Asteras Tripolis
Platanias v Olympiakos Piraeus
Veria v Aris
Kalloni v Xanthi
OFI v Ergotelis
Apollon Smirnis v Panaitolikos
Panathinaikos v Panthrakiko
PAS Giannina v Panionios

Turkey
Elazığspor v Eskişehirspor
Galatasaray v Karabükspor
Gençlerbirliği v Kasımpaşa
Trabzonspor v Sivasspor
Gaziantepspor v Konyaspor
Antalyaspor v Akhisar Beledi…
Kayseri Erciye… v Fenerbahçe
Bursaspor v Kayserispor
Beşiktaş v Rizespor

Holland
Go Ahead Eagles V Feyenoord
RKC Waalwijk V Roda JC
Utrecht V NAC Breda
Twente V Ajax
Heerenveen V Vitesse
Heracles V NEC
Groningen V PSV
PEC Zwolle V ADO Den Haag
AZ V Cambuur

Portugal
Vitória Setúbal v Belenenses
Paços de Ferreira v Vitória Guimarães
Olhanense v Arouca
Sporting Braga v Académica
Marítimo v Estoril
Benfica v Nacional
Porto v Sporting CP
Rio Ave v Gil Vicente

European World Cup Group Standings

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Belgium	10	8	2	0	18	4	+14	26
2 Croatia	10	5	2	3	12	9	+3	17
3 Serbia	10	4	2	4	18	11	+7	14
4 Scotland	10	3	2	5	8	12	-4	11
5 Wales	10	3	1	6	9	20	-11	10
6 Macedoni	10	2	1	7	7	16	-9	7

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Italy	10	6	4	0	19	9	+10	22
2 Denmark	10	4	4	2	17	12	+5	16
3 Czech Rep	10	4	3	3	13	9	+4	15
4 Bulgaria	10	3	4	3	14	9	+5	13
5 Armenia	10	4	1	5	12	13	-1	13
6 Malta	10	1	0	9	5	28	-23	3

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Germany	10	9	1	0	36	10	+26	28
2 Sweden	10	6	2	2	19	14	+5	20
3 Austria	10	5	2	3	20	10	+10	17
4 Rep of Ire	10	4	2	4	16	17	-1	14
5 Kazakhsta	10	1	2	7	6	21	-15	5
6 Faroe Is	10	0	1	9	4	29	-25	1

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Holland	10	9	1	0	34	5	+29	28
2 Romania	10	6	1	3	19	12	+7	19
3 Hungary	10	5	2	3	21	20	+1	17
4 Turkey	10	5	1	4	16	9	+7	16
5 Estonia	10	2	1	7	6	20	-14	7
6 Andorra	10	0	0	10	0	30	-30	0

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Switzer	10	7	3	0	17	6	+11	24
2 Iceland	10	5	2	3	17	15	+2	17
3 Slovenia	10	5	0	5	14	11	+3	15
4 Norway	10	3	3	4	10	13	-3	12
5 Albania	10	3	2	5	9	11	-2	11
6 Cyprus	10	1	2	7	4	15	-11	5

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Russia	10	7	1	2	20	5	+15	22
2 Portugal	10	6	3	1	20	9	+11	21
3 Israel	10	3	5	2	19	14	+5	14
4 Azerbaijan	10	1	6	3	7	11	-4	9
5 Nth Ire	10	1	4	5	9	17	-8	7
6 Luxemb	10	1	3	6	7	26	-19	6

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Bosnia	10	8	1	1	30	6	+24	25
2 Greece	10	8	1	1	12	4	+8	25
3 Slovakia	10	3	4	3	11	10	+1	13
4 Lithuania	10	3	2	5	9	11	-2	11
5 Latvia	10	2	2	6	10	20	-10	8
6 Liechtenst	10	0	2	8	4	25	-21	2

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 England	10	6	4	0	31	4	+27	22
2 Ukraine	10	6	3	1	28	4	+24	21
3 Monteneg	10	4	3	3	18	17	+1	15
4 Poland	10	3	4	3	18	12	+6	13
5 Moldova	10	3	2	5	12	17	-5	11
6 San Mar	10	0	0	10	1	54	-53	0

Group I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Spain	8	6	2	0	14	3	+11	20
2 France	8	5	2	1	15	6	+9	17
3 Finland	8	2	3	3	5	9	-4	9
4 Georgia	8	1	2	5	3	10	-7	5
5 Belarus	8	1	1	6	7	16	-9	4

ENGLISH LEAGUE ONE

Bristol City PSTP Crawley Town
Shrewsbury Town 2 - 0 Gillingham
Leyton Orient 2 - 1 Milton Keynes Dons
Stevenage 2 - 1 Brentford
Rotherham United 0 - 4 Swindon Town
Preston North End 0 - 2 Crewe Alexandra
Colchester United 1 - 1 Walsall
Port Vale 0 - 1 Peterborough U…
Bradford City 0 - 1 Tranmere Rovers
Coventry City 3 - 2 Sheffield United

ENGLISH LEAGUE TWO

Plymouth Argyle 1 - 1 Portsmouth
Oxford United 2 - 0 Northampton Town
Burton Albion 0 - 1 Southend United
Rochdale 3 - 0 Newport County
Bury 0 - 2 Morecambe
AFC Wimbledon 1 - 1 Accrington Stanley
Wycombe Wanderers 3 - 2 Torquay United
Mansfield Town 1 - 1 Bristol Rovers
Exeter City 0 - 3 Hartlepool United
Dagenham & Red… 1 - 2 Cheltenham Town
Fleetwood Town 1 - 1 Chesterfield

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